

UNION AND CONFEDERATE SECRETARIES OF THE NAVY:
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE SECRETARIES DURING THE CIVIL WAR

A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army
Command and General Staff College in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

by

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B.A., University of Illinois, Champaign, Illinois, 1983

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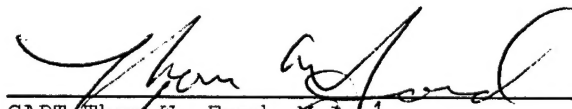
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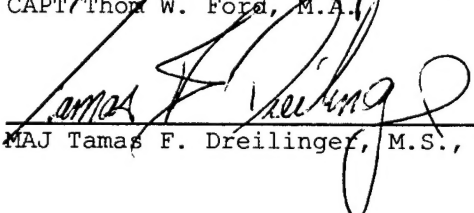
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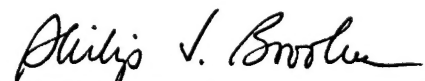
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ABSTRACT

UNION AND CONFEDERATE SECRETARIES OF THE NAVY: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE SECRETARIES DURING THE CIVIL WAR by LCDR Royce L. Smith, USN, 137 pages.

This study investigates why Secretaries Gideon Welles and Stephen Mallory were able to remain in office for the entire span of the Civil War, while most of their contemporaries did not last their full term. The study explores Secretaries Mallory's and Welles' approach to their jobs and their Departmental policies that contributed to their successes and failures.

Naval warfare played a key role during the Civil War, for without the efforts of the Navy Secretaries, the war's outcome could have been significantly different. This study explores their backgrounds, actions taken during the war, and personal relationships between them and others within the administration.

This study explains that the longevity of Mallory and Welles can be attributed to their departmental policy decisions and by roles each played within the administration of their respective Presidents. Both Secretaries demonstrated high levels of initiative and effectiveness with their administrative methods, departmental policies, and approach to naval warfare. It was these strengths that significantly contributed to their longevity.

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CHAPTER 1

NAVAL WARFARE AND THE CIVIL WAR

The purpose of this study is to compare and contrast the administrations of Confederate Secretary of the Navy Stephen Mallory and Union Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles. This research will concentrate on answering the question: "Can the longevity of Secretaries Mallory and Welles be explained by departmental policy decisions and by their role within the administration of each respective President?" While seeking to answer the question, neither the final outcome of the war nor independent actions taken by naval commanders will be considered.

Although several books and studies have discussed the administrations of either Secretary Welles or Secretary Mallory, none compared their administration and leadership styles and examined the effects on their longevity in office. This thorough investigation into their administrations utilizes official government records, personal documents, and accounts by personnel involved in the respective administration of Secretaries Mallory and Welles.

The study addresses four important questions. First, what considerations and qualifications did each respective President consider during the selection process for Secretary of the Navy? Second, what techniques did Secretaries Mallory and Welles use during the Civil War to deal with detractors to their policies? Third, what role did each Secretary play in the administration of his President? Lastly, in what

ways did Mallory and Welles resemble each other in their administrative methods, departmental policies and approaches toward naval warfare? These questions are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

An important realization is that the role of naval warfare during the Civil War has not received the attention commensurate with the history of the land campaigns, probably because some historians considered its role less dramatic. While some naval events of the War are familiar to most people, such as the battle between Monitor and Merrimack/Virginia and Farragut at Mobile Bay, several events during the War greatly affected the character of the War and influenced naval warfare for years to come. These significant events included the Union Navy's important role in Grant's final campaign in Virginia,¹ development of anti-ship mines by the Confederates, and the disruption by Confederate commerce raiders which affected up to fifty percent of United States merchant shipping during the Civil War.

An understanding of naval activities during the War is predicated on an appreciation for how decisions were made by the civilian leaders of the Navies during the Civil War. In understanding the decision process, one must first understand the actions and policies of the Confederate and United States Secretaries of the Navy, Stephen R. Mallory and Gideon Welles.

The long tenure of both the Union and Confederate Secretaries of the Navy suggests that each displayed a high degree of effectiveness in executing his duties. An interesting fact that emphasizes this point is that Navy Secretaries during the 1840s and 1850s served an average of less than two years.² Yet, Stephen Mallory was the Confederate Secretary of

Navy for over four years, and Gideon Welles led the United States Navy for eight years under two Presidents, Abraham Lincoln and Andrew Johnson.

Many factors can influence the tenure of a Naval Secretary during war, but the two major ones are his ability to use the resources available and his leadership ability. Resource management can be broken into three areas: shipbuilding, the effective use of available men, and the capability to direct the scientific community in engineering new naval technology. Leadership, on the other hand, is an area that is composed of a Secretary's experience, handling of subordinate leaders, and dealings with other political counterparts in the cabinet and legislature.

The industrial base of both countries caused Mallory and Welles to deal with shipbuilding differently. From Philadelphia to Boston, the North had developed numerous shipyards and an experienced work force since the Revolution, thus offering the ability to build both a river-going and a sea-going fleet. However, the South during the antebellum years depended upon Northern shipowners to transport Southern agricultural goods to markets in Europe; because of this, the South had no need to know how to build ships. A few Southern shipyards were devoted to small-boat construction along the Atlantic and Gulf coast. Other Southern yards had built shallow-draft ships for use on southern rivers, but their "flimsy construction and weak power plants" were not suited for war.³ As a result, the South had not developed a major shipbuilding industry and would be forced to attempt to acquire a foreign-built fleet.

Maritime manpower was a valuable resource for both sides and would prove itself as a significant factor as the need for ships during the war.

At the outbreak of the war, the Union Navy had about 1,000 professional

officers of all grades and about 7,500 enlisted men available for service.⁴ No naval reserve existed, but the U.S. Navy was able to draw from the American merchant marine force.⁵ In the South, Mallory started with about 300 former U.S. naval officers and a small pool of seamen.⁶

It was during the American Civil War that naval warfare saw the beginning of many scientific developments that would influence naval warfare for years to come. Before the Civil War, the United States Navy had been reluctant to recognize the preeminence of armored vessels, even though significant evidence was provided, during the Crimean War, that exploding shot would decimate wooden hull ships.⁷ Mallory and Welles went against tradition; each played a significant role in the development of armored ship technology for their respective navies.

As noted earlier, Mallory would indeed be building a new Navy from the keel up. Jefferson Davis, Mallory's strongest supporter, provided reasons for Mallory's selection as Secretary of the Navy:

Mr. Mallory, of Florida, had been chairman of the Committee on Naval Affairs in the United States Senate, was extensively acquainted with the officers of the navy, and for a landsman, had much knowledge of nautical affairs; therefore he was selected for Secretary of the Navy.⁸

Following his appointment to Jefferson Davis's cabinet on March 4, 1861, Mallory began developing a navy. Since the Confederacy had no naval assets, Mallory was involved in developing an effective program of commerce raiding against American merchants by Confederate cruisers throughout the war. The effectiveness of the raiders caused a rapid increase in marine insurance rates which induced many northern shipowners to reflag their vessels in an attempt to avoid capture and destruction by the Confederate cruisers. This raiding effectiveness is further reflected

in a concurrent decrease of one million tons in foreign trade from 1860 to 1865.⁹

While serving on the Naval Affairs Committee in the United States Senate, Mallory believed that the day of the iron ship was coming, and as the Confederate Navy Secretary quickly exploited his vision by converting the captured U.S.S. Merrimack into the ironclad C.S.S. Virginia. Although Mallory built other iron ships, he was hampered by the unavailability of reliable engines and by a shortage of material required for development of cannons using explosive shells. Southern efforts to buy ironclads abroad were only partially successful due to the United States' diplomatic efforts with France and England, forcing Mallory to attempt to develop an ironclad building program in the South.

Other innovations by Mallory and his staff included developing the torpedo boat, the water mine, and the first modern submarine, the C.S.S. H. L. Hunley, which sank a U.S. warship (and itself with the same torpedo) in Charleston harbor in 1864.

The situation that faced Welles in the north was of a similar nature to Mallory's, for in 1860 the United States Navy was at its weakest point for two generations.¹⁰ The last Congress under President Buchanan's had rejected appropriations for money repairing naval vessels and for enlisting sailors to adequately man the fleet.¹¹ Then-Secretary of the Navy Isaac Toucey had assigned twenty-seven vessels, more than one-half of the operational U.S. Navy, to foreign stations in the East Indies, Mediterranean, Brazil, African coast, and the Pacific. The ships remaining in American waters were unable to concentrate off of key

Southern cities. For his failure to act, the U.S. Congress censured Toucey only two days before President Lincoln took office.¹²

When, at the urging of Vice-President Hamlin, Lincoln appointed Gideon Welles to replace Toucey as Secretary of the Navy in March 1861, Welles found himself depending on his previous administrative experience. Before coming to the Department, Welles' experience included editing the Hartford Times and serving in the Connecticut legislature and several other state offices. His naval experience came when President Polk appointed him as Chief of the Bureau of Provisions and Clothing in the Navy Department in 1844. His position became more important as the war with Mexico expanded, because of the increased logistical demands to support U.S. Naval Forces in the Pacific, while on extended duty from home base. As bureau chief, he established a business-like atmosphere that had not previously existed.¹³ Although a life-time member of the Democratic party, he left the party over the slavery issue, helped to organize the Republican party, and in 1854 founded the pro-Republican Hartford Evening Press.

With his experience in working with the navy during his tenure in the Navy Department, Welles was able to quickly build an adequate navy from Toucey's shell: Union ships closed ports on both Confederate coasts and established a fleet of gunboats and ironclads on the Mississippi. Secretary Welles provides some insight of plans in his letter of January 23, 1862 to Admiral S. Du Pont, Commander South Atlantic Blockading Squadron:

The importance of a rigorous blockade at every point under your command cannot be too strongly impressed or felt. By cutting off all communication, we not only cripple and distress the states in insurrection, but by an effective blockade we destroy any excuse or

pretext on the part of foreign governments to aid and relieve those who are waging war upon the Government.¹⁴

Welles was an able administrator whose supervision of a navy severely affected by budget cuts was creditable. Like his counterpart in the South, he also realized that ironclads were needed in the future navy and responded quickly. The U.S.S. Monitor was quickly designed to do battle with the Merrimack/Virginia in the first clash of floating iron. These efforts continued to include the development of special river ironclads which eventually enabled the North to roam Southern waterways almost at will.

Both Secretaries entered their jobs with similar challenges and goals. Welles found himself with a navy in which only forty-two of ninety vessels were in commission,¹⁵ and Mallory took control of a navy in name only. Shortly after taking command of their respective navies, Mallory and Welles were locked in a deadly game of chess. Each man sought ways to counter the other's policies and actions, as well as new and innovative methods to give one navy any advantage over the other. Sharing common visions, such as the end of wooden ships, these men sought to bring iron ships, new tactics, and naval weapons into a war that would greatly affect the world's naval affairs for years to come.

Each man had his political enemies who wanted to replace him on grounds that he did not do enough for the cause. Several times during the Civil War both men were called before their respective congresses to give an account of their department's actions or involvement in naval battles; yet both men were able to hold on to their jobs during a time that saw most of the other Cabinet members replaced.

In answering the four primary research questions cited earlier, this study will focus on four areas. First, the study will highlight Mallory's and Welles's backgrounds, political views, and experiences in naval affairs. Second, it will show each Secretary's role within his respective administration, including each man's working relationship with his President, fellow cabinet members, Congress, and state politicians. Next the study will explore how each Secretary approached his job in the areas of leadership, personnel, promotions, and organization of the Navy Department. Lastly, an evaluation of warfare policies enacted during the war will provide an insight into how Mallory and Welles handled rapidly changing technology and naval doctrine.

Endnotes

¹Bern Anderson, By Sea and By River: The Naval History of the Civil War (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962), v.

²William Fowler, Under Two Flags: The American Navy in the Civil War (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1990), 33.

³Ibid., 41.

⁴Anderson, 290.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid., 12.

⁷Fowler, 32.

⁸Jefferson Davis, The Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1881), 1:242.

⁹Historical Statistics of the United States (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing, 1925), 2:750.

¹⁰Edward Channing, History of the United States (New York: MacMillan Company, 1925), 6:486.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Fowler, 34.

¹³Richard S. West, Gideon Welles: Lincoln's Navy Department (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1943), 63-64.

¹⁴Charles B. Boynton, History of the Navy During the Rebellion (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1869), 1:44.

¹⁵Edgar Maclay, History of the United States Navy from 1775-1901 (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1906), 2:159.

CHAPTER 2

RESUMES OF THE SECRETARIES

Early 1861 found Mallory and Welles on a path that would make them both leading actors in one of the most momentous episodes of American history, the Civil War. To understand their leadership and organizational style displayed during the Civil War, first, an appreciation of the paths that both men followed during the years prior to their nominations as Secretary of the Navy for their respective countries must be gained.

Gideon Welles was born in 1802 in Glastonbury, Connecticut. His father Samuel Welles was one of the most enterprising businessmen in Connecticut. A major influence in his life was his mother Ann Hale Welles, relative of the Revolutionary patriot Nathan Hale. Welles was frail during the years following his birth, and there were even times when he was not expected to recover from various childhood illnesses.¹ However, he eventually grew into a tall boy, lithe of muscle, who showed no effects from his early ill health, other than a slight moodiness and fondness for being alone. He enjoyed long walks over the hills and berry-picking in the half-cleared fields behind his home. He enjoyed riding horses and pitching hay; schoolwork depressed him.²

During his early teenage years there were many deaths in the family. His Grandfather and Grandmother Hale were the first to pass away, but the most disheartening were the deaths of his mother and older brother Sam, within two years of each other. Welles' father, fearful that

Gideon's depression as a result of these deaths would become a fixed habit, sent him away to the Protestant Episcopal Academy at Cheshire, Connecticut, when he was seventeen years old. At Cheshire, Welles established a number of friendships that would benefit him throughout his career, including that with Andrew Foote--future naval hero of the Civil War.

Shortly after his graduation from the Cheshire Academy in 1821, he went to visit his relatives in Pennsylvania. While traveling, he began writing descriptions of the places he visited and the people he met. Several of these stories were published by the New York Mirror. But writing was not considered respectable, nor was it financially rewarding. Once Welles was back in Connecticut, his family insisted that he find a profession with more status. Welles floated amid business ventures and small-town politics, and even served a stint as a sergeant in the militia. One business venture that Welles entered into was with Ransome Tomlinson, brother of a classmate at Cheshire Academy. The business was composed of commerce, merchandise, shipbuilding, and coopering, of which neither man had much experience and soon saw their venture fail within six months.³

Serving as a member on the town of Glastonbury's committee in charge of arranging the celebration for the forty-seventh birthday of America's Independence, Welles delivered the Fourth of July oration. In the speech, he rebuked the "arrogance of Europe's nobility, lauded Jefferson and envisioned the Ark of America's liberty riding triumphant over the waters of commotion."⁴ This was the first and only time during fifty years of politics that Welles would deliver a formal speech.⁵

Though surrounded by Federalists in 1824, Welles decided to cast his political lot with the democrat Andrew Jackson; he was now, and remained at heart for the rest of his life, a Jacksonian Democrat. Embracing Jacksonian Democracy quickly, he campaigned for both Jackson and Judge John Niles, a leading Connecticut politician and publisher of the Hartford Times and Weekly Advertiser.

After Jackson's and Niles' defeat in 1824, for President and Congress, Welles spent a year at Norwich, Vermont, as a student in Captain Alden Partridge's American Literary, Scientific, and Military Academy. Then he returned to Hartford to study law.⁶ He studied in Hartford with Justice Thomas Williams and William Ellsworth, member of Congress.⁷ During this time Welles continued to write fiction for various newspapers.

In 1826 Niles, who recognized Welles' talent as a writer, put Welles to work writing political editorials. Those who felt the bite of his editorials called him an "illiberal pedagogue,"⁸ but Welles also earned respect as an impartial editor.

It was during the 1828 presidential campaign that Welles decided that he needed to learn more about the American political system and its parties. To become more acquainted with the system, he wrote to a number of prominent men around the country, asking for their advice. Thomas Jefferson's reply to Welles' inquiries about John Adams, which the retired President later published in the Richmond Enquirer, convinced Welles that he had not misjudged Adams' nor Jefferson's philosophy. It was this correspondence that convinced Welles that Andrew Jackson's views were akin to Jefferson's democratic principles.⁹

With Jackson's Presidential victory in 1828, Welles' prestige in Connecticut quickly grew. President-elect Jackson rewarded Welles for his support during the campaign, by making him his party manager in Connecticut. Later that year, the voters of Glastonbury elected Welles to be their representative to the State Assembly. Even Hartford society embraced Welles and regularly sent him invitations to balls and other major events. His position in the state militia was affected as well, when he was promoted from Sergeant to Major.¹⁰

In 1829 Niles was appointed Postmaster, in appreciation for his support during the 1828 Presidential campaign, by President Jackson. Consequently, Welles became the editor of the Hartford Times. During Jackson's reelection campaign in 1833, Welles delivered the state of Connecticut into Jackson's camp, but was unable to get sufficient votes to elect himself to Congress.

Love came to Welles in 1833, when he started a nine-month campaign to convince his Aunt Jane Hale to allow him to marry his sixteen-year-old first cousin, Mary Jane. Finally, in early 1834, he received permission to marry her from Aunt Jane, but only after she turned eighteen in 1835.¹¹

In 1836 Niles was elected to the U.S. Senate, and Welles moved into the office of Postmaster at Hartford. However, Welles lost his job in the Whig victory of William Harrison in 1840. Consequently, from 1840 to 1845 Welles went through a time of personal anguish. His desire for recognition and control of the Connecticut Democratic party had not been realized, even though he was elected comptroller of Connecticut twice.¹²

However, in 1844 his prestige was restored through his support of the victorious Democrat, President James Polk. Welles was rewarded for

his work during the campaign with an appointment to the Navy Department as Chief of the Bureau of Provisions and Clothing. Although naval officers objected to having a civilian in the position, the Senate approved him, but only after the Vice President broke a tie vote.¹³

As the only civilian bureau chief, Welles found himself in a difficult position. The naval officers were polite and professional, but they excluded him from their social circle.¹⁴

Nevertheless, Welles quickly impressed George Bancroft, Secretary of the Navy, by producing figures that supported Welles' assertion that the African Squadron was properly supplied. Welles' reports contained a dozen or more recommendations that simplified yet strengthen procurement procedures, thus saving money and improving naval stores and transport. His analyses and estimates were accurate, and carefully constructed.¹⁵

He continued to improve the efficiency of the navy's accounting by demoting clerks who could not add and subtract. Welles "issued clear and detailed instructions for inspectors, naval storekeepers, and navy agents, and required them to submit accurate monthly and quarterly reports."¹⁶ Unafraid of responsibility, he effected reforms where they were needed.

However, Welles continued to have difficulty in securing accurate information about ships and squadron operations that would affect his duties, because of his military colleagues' reluctance to speak freely around him, a civilian. Only later would he become fully acquainted with many of the officers whose labors he was to direct.

Welles' tenure in public office ended on June 16, 1849, when the Whigs and Zachary Taylor came to power. He returned to Connecticut politics as a writer for the Hartford Times. Like many Northern

Democrats, Welles supported the doctrine of states' rights, but he disapproved of the apparent southern desire to nationalize the institution of slavery. Saddened at the direction his party was taking in terms of the slavery issue, he broke publicly with the Democrats in 1855 and joined the newly formed Republican party.

The following year he accepted the party's nomination for governor of Connecticut. It was a race he was sure to lose, but it placed Welles in the national spotlight in the process. His political efforts earned him a seat on the Republican National Committee. Welles was a key influence during the first Republican Convention at Philadelphia in 1856, when he coauthored the first Republican party platform. It was upon this platform that the Republican Party's first presidential candidate, John Fremont, almost won. During the years following Fremont's defeat, Welles emerged as a leading spokesman for the former Democratic party members of the Republican Party.¹⁷

His work in 1856 and the years following would ensure Welles a critical place at the Republican party's convention in 1860. There he led the opposition to William Seward's candidacy for the Presidency, in favor of Salmon Chase. In Chase, Welles saw a candidate that was even more clearly opposed to slavery and strongly supportive of the preservation of state rights than those running for the nomination. Welles' dedicated work for Chase behind the scenes of the convention eroded Seward's support among the New England delegations, thus allowing Abraham Lincoln's supporters the opportunity to consolidate their position. By the third ballot, Lincoln became the Republican Party's second presidential candidate.

Even though Welles had strongly supported Chase during the convention, he was satisfied that Lincoln's political position would be much more acceptable as a candidate than that held by Seward. Thus, as the Convention came to a close, Welles immediately set out to campaign for the Republican Party's cause. In November, Lincoln took not only Connecticut but all of New England. In the nation as a whole, the Democratic split enabled Lincoln, with only 1,857,610 votes out of 4,662,170, to win the election.¹⁸

The new Republican party, which was in fact a coalition of interest, united by a fear of Southern "slave power," included a diversity of groups, including Free-soilers, Democrats, and Whigs. Lincoln needed to consider their interests, in order to prevent alienating any one faction. Accordingly, Lincoln put together a cabinet that reflected the diverse composition of the party.¹⁹

Lincoln's vice president, Hannibal Hamlin, advised the new President on cabinet nominees. He proposed three men, from New England, as candidates for the Navy Department: Charles Adams, Nathaniel Banks and Gideon Welles. Adams and Banks were both associated with William Seward, Lincoln's choice for the Secretary of State.²⁰ The new President picked Welles. Lincoln's selection of Welles as a member of his cabinet provided the new President with the balanced cabinet that would present views from both sides of the Republican Party, thus providing Lincoln with the even-handed counsel he would need during the early days of the up-coming crisis.

By contrast, while Gideon Welles was a man whose roots were developed and remained in conservative New England, Stephen R. Mallory's

roots started with a New England connection, but then diverged from there. In 1809 he was born on the island of Jamaica. His father, John, was a civil engineer from Connecticut, and his mother, Ellen, was an Irish immigrant. Ill with consumption, John Mallory moved the family to Havana, New York and Mobile, before finally settling down in Key West, Florida.²¹ At this time Florida was still a sparsely inhabited territory of the United States. Key West in 1826 was little more than a small collection of buildings perched on a coral outcropping far from the mainland.

During his younger days, Mallory was a boy who reveled in study. He read any book that he could get his hands on and made detailed notes about each one.

During his teens he paid a lot of attention to forming good moral habits. He copied and placed a set of resolutions, composed in part by himself, throughout his room in positions that he could not help but see them. He did not smoke nor drink, and held women in high esteem.²²

Local politics attracted young Mallory, and through his connections with the editor of the Key West Enquirer and Judge William Marvin, he secured for himself the post of inspector of customs and town marshal for Key West. They were hardly demanding jobs. While collecting his government salary, Mallory began to study law with Judge Marvin, an authority on the jurisprudence of sea wrecks and salvage, who was also the U.S. district court judge at Key West.²³

In 1834, after being rebuffed by his future wife, Angela Moreno, Mallory started to write poems and began to submit them to the Key West Enquirer. This diversion soon gave way to weekly letters to the editor on a variety of subjects. In 1835 during a hotly contested debate over

repealing the law that had abolished the charter for Key West, Mallory wrote, "So can any body of people be governed by laws made without their consent or approval, but in direct violation of both," and went on to say "that every citizen should have a voice in formulating the provisions of the charter which, once in force, he was bound to obey."²⁴ This debate over Key West's charter lays the groundwork for his early beliefs that it was every man's responsibility to stand up for what he believed, but once the law was enacted, i.e., on the national level, it must be supported until overturned.

After another rejection of marriage from his beloved Angela, Mallory enlisted in the Florida militia during the Second Seminole War (1836-1839). After enlisting, Mallory was placed in command of a centerboard schooner-rigged whaleboat, Angela, and conducted operations against the Seminoles. A majority of the operations took place in the Everglades, up winding shallow streams near Tampa Bay and along the endless sandy coast of the Gulf of Mexico. Over twenty years later, Mallory's maritime and inland water experience came into play, as he prepared to defend the Confederacy's inland waterways.

On his return from the war, Mallory finally married Angela and passed the bar. With his education in jurisprudence of sea wrecks and salvage, Mallory began to practice maritime law before the court of Judge Marvin, his teacher, and was regarded by James Wescott, a prominent Florida lawyer and statesman, as one of "the best lawyers of his age in the state."²⁵ Soon he became one of the state's leading Democratic politicians. Just as Welles grew suspicious of southern motives, Mallory grew impatient with northern hostility.

In 1850 Mallory became a candidate for U.S. Senate from Florida against the incumbent, David Yulee, considered by many a "Southern Radical." During this campaign for the senate, Mallory showed his political views by admitting that he did not view the Compromise of 1850 positively. However, if it could create some common ground between beliefs in the North and those in the South, and induce the Union to accept Southern opinion on prominent measures such as Southern rights in territories or the recovery of fugitive slaves, then it would accomplish a work of vital importance. Mallory was convinced that the North was united against the South; thus the South had to unify around a common platform. His nomination went to the state legislature, and after a intense confrontation between the supporters of Mallory and Yulee, Mallory was elected Florida's senator.²⁶

His credentials were presented to the Senate by Senator Jackson Morton of Florida, on December 13, 1851, and on that same day Mallory was sworn in. Mallory's first act on the floor of the U.S. Senate was to defend his right to be there, because Senator Yulee took his own claim for the seat to the floor of the Senate. Senator Yulee claimed he had received a majority of the votes actually cast, even though many representatives submitted "blanks," thus preventing him from receiving fifty-one percent of the vote. He appealed to the "people's law," claiming that he had received a majority of the ballots actually counted and that it was not legal to count "blanks" in the total of the vote. Yulee's claim against this method was ironic since he had been elected Senator in 1844 using the same method that Mallory's supporters had used.²⁷

It was Senator Henry Clay, the Great Compromiser, in his last speech before the Senate, who finally convinced the Senate that Mallory, not Yulee, should be confirmed in the Senate. Clay called attention to the fact the Yulee's claim had been presented to a congressional committee and rejected by the same. He saw no reason why Mallory's status in the Senate should be questioned.²⁸ With Clay's support Mallory was officially recognized as the Senator from Florida, and thus with Clay's death and Mallory's entry into the Senate, a new era in Southern politics had begun.

In the Senate, Mallory took a post on the Naval Affairs Committee; not long after that, he became chairman. His own naval and maritime law background suited him well for the post, and Mallory became knowledgeable in naval matters, as well as a champion for the Navy's cause. Throughout his tenure as chairman of Naval Affairs, he worked toward strengthening the navy by adding more ships of effective design and size, and he sponsored the Naval Reform Act and the Naval Retiring Board. He came to know more about developments in naval technology and weapons than many other civilians in Washington, including the various Secretaries of the Navy during this time.

In 1853 the Senate took under consideration legislation granting further funds for continued experimentation with the vessel known as the "Stevens Battery," an early ironclad. Mallory argued that the battery provided a movable defense for New York harbor, and its iron armor, of more than nine-inch thicknesses, made the vessel practically impregnable to gunfire. The Stevens Battery did not receive an extension, but Mallory had achieved his first insight into the future of naval warfare: the importance of armor.

In the Thirty-fifth Congress, opening in December 1857, Mallory continued his efforts to build up the United States Navy. As a means of raising the quality of naval personnel, he recommended higher wages for seamen on ships of war and merchantmen and campaigned against laws prohibiting the Navy from recruiting foreigners. Some of his strongest debates centered on the question of what principle of design was the proper guide for building American ships of war. The arguments involved whether to build a few large ships or many small ones, ironclads or wooden hulls. Mallory declared that the guidance in what to build must come from looking abroad to England and that the standards in building the fleet must be based on the type of fleet the navy was most likely to use in war.²⁹

A further review of Mallory's activities in the Senate provides us with an insight into his views on slavery as well. During the Senate's debate over the Kansas-Nebraska Act, Mallory found himself in the middle of a test of words with Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts. When Senator Sumner declared that he recognized no obligation to enforce the Fugitive Slave Law, Mallory responded as follows:

Sir, if the Senator will examine the Constitution, he will find it there written that a fugitive from service or labor "shall be delivered up." If he recognizes no such obligation, I leave it to himself to explain the consistency between the oath which he has taken and the sentiments which he disavows. Sir, can he rise in his place and say here that a Senator shall be permitted to make mental reservations? Is that the explanation? That he is at liberty to exempt himself from those obligations which bind the humblest citizen?³⁰

Toward the end of Mallory's career as a Senator he had the opportunity to participate in the Kansas debates with what many have deemed his greatest speech. He took up the issue of limiting the expansion of slavery itself. In defending the Southern right to expand

slavery into the Territories and to admit Kansas as a slave state, Mallory stated:

The 23d day of January, 1854 inaugurated a period of political excitement throughout a large portion of our confederacy, which, still progressing undetermined, has thus far been characterized by such bitterness, such a spirit of rancor towards the southern States of the Confederacy, as, in the judgement of judicious men everywhere, is not only destroying the bonds of our social, is having an immediate tendency to destroy the bonds of our political Union. On that day the obliteration of the Missouri compromise line, was made a feature of Kansas-Nebraska bill. . . .

. . . Standing where she has ever stood, and where I trust she will always be found, by the Constitution, she demanded nothing from the fraternal feeling, from the forbearance of her sister States; but she did demand, as a recognition of the political equality of the States, the right to go with her property into the common domain of the Confederacy. Upon this demand we went before the country; and, after a heated and excited contest, the offensive statute (Missouri Compromise) was wiped from the statute-book. . . .

. . . If I believed the rights of the South were depended upon an equilibrium of free and slave states, I would use every human effort of which I am capable to induce the South to go out of the Union tomorrow. It were worse than folly, it would be the basest of crimes, to postpone to a distant day of comparative weakness, the correction of approaching evils, which, in our hour of strength, we may readily avert. . . .

. . . With exultant tone we are told that she will rule no more. Be it so. In withdrawing from the ship of State, we may, at least, with pride look back upon the track she has traced upon the pathway of nations, marked, as it is, by imperishable monuments of man's cheering progress; and we may point to the storms of faction, the open assaults of foreign and domestic foes, and the treacherous deceits of pretending friends which, under the pilotage of the South, and the Constitution her only chart, she has nobly weathered; and now with all her banners aloft, her fame established, and her name unstained, with placid seas beneath, and smiling heavens above her, freighted with the hearts, the hopes, the liberties of mankind--we will resign her as the greatest, the noblest trust that ever came from the hands of men. In the language of my friend from South Carolina, (Governor Hammond), "great will be our honor and your responsibility;" and be sure that you let the world behold, when we demand her back, as demand her back we may, that you restore the emblem of her glory with no stripe erased--every star undimmed. Sir, I neither deplore this loss of power, nor fear its consequences to the South. She will be more than ever watchful of her rights, more sternly resolved to maintain them.³¹

During the days leading up to secession, Mallory would not join any efforts directed toward immediate secession. However, when Florida seceded on 10 January 1861, Mallory's course was clear. With considerable sadness, but confident in the rightness of his cause, Senator Mallory went south.

The Confederate Congress established a Navy Department on February 21, 1861.³² Almost immediately after the creation of the Navy Department, President Davis named Mallory as its secretary. In commenting on Mallory's qualification for the post, President Davis stated, "A statesman of unique and preeminent qualities, with a thorough grasp of naval history and unusual administrative gifts, would have found a fair field for his powers."³³ Equally important, Davis cabinet appointments were made without the intention of appeasing other southern leaders. Some of Davis' political opponents hinted that he wanted no men of ability around him and that he treated his cabinet not as advisors as was the custom in the United States government, but as what the term implied, "mere clerks." Mallory was even described as "anti-secessionist,"³⁴ but throughout the War, Mallory's actions would go a long way in proving that he at least was not selected to be a "mere clerk."

On March 18, 1862, Mallory was formally nominated as Secretary of the Navy, and was subsequently approved by a vote of thirteen to six. Two of three Florida representatives on the Confederate Committee on Naval Affairs voted against his confirmation on grounds that he was "anti-secessionist."³⁵ On the same day, a vote to reconsider Judah P. Benjamin's appointment as Secretary of State failed by eight votes to thirteen.³⁶

Hence as Welles and Mallory entered office, their experiences in politics, personal work ethics and established ideologies provided them a guide for the troubled times ahead. Their political experience came into play, as each man would have to defend himself against attacks from Congress, fellow cabinet members and state politicians. Their work ethic had been key to their success throughout their careers and would be one of the most praised traits of each Secretary during the War.

Each brought to his Department similar beliefs and experiences, yet it was their diverse backgrounds in naval affairs that allowed each to succeed. Welles' time in the Bureau of Provisions and Clothing enabled him to enter the job with a view of how the Department needed to be organized and directed, yet Welles was severely hampered by his lack of technical knowledge in naval affairs. In the South, Mallory relied on his technical knowledge, gained from his time on the U.S. Senate's Naval Affairs Committee, to quickly organize his plan for building the Confederate Navy. Yet, unlike Welles, he had difficulties in organizing his Department during the early stages of the War.

Both Welles and Mallory were traditionalists who believed in states' rights, but their biggest difference in ideology was over the issue of slavery. Welles was strongly against the institution of slavery. While not a slave owner himself, Mallory supported the view of his home state. Both men strongly believed in the Constitution and the process of democracy and took similar stands over the enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Law. Mallory's support of the law was based on his Southern roots and the belief that Southern State's rights must be respected by their Northern counterparts. Welles' support of the law took a different turn:

he believed that slavery was morally wrong, but because Congress established the law he must uphold it until the day it was repealed.

Welles and Mallory were idealists and self-made men who devoted their energies to the public good as they saw it. Each viewed the breaking up of the Union with pain and sadness, yet they each prized even more the principles that their respective state held.

Endnotes

¹West, 19.

²Ibid.

³John Niven, Gideon Welles: Lincoln's Secretary of the Navy (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 13.

⁴West, 25.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid., 27.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Fowler, 35.

⁹West, 31.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Niven, 161-165.

¹²Ibid., 193.

¹³John Niven, "Gideon Welles," American Secretaries of the Navy, ed. Paolo E. Coletta (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1980), 1:322.

¹⁴Niven, Gideon Welles: Lincoln's Secretary of the Navy, 212.

¹⁵Ibid., 215.

¹⁶West, 64.

¹⁷Niven, "Gideon Welles," American Secretaries of the Navy, 1:323.

¹⁸West, 88.

¹⁹Fowler, 35.

²⁰Ibid., 36.

²¹Durkin, 11.

²²Ibid., 18.

²³Ibid., 19.

²⁴Ibid., 28.

²⁵Ibid., 31.

²⁶Ibid., 38-39.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸The Congressional Globe, Thirty-Second Congress, First Session, ed. John C. Rives, Vol. 25 (Washington, DC: Office of John C. Rives, 1852), 1:2-4.

²⁹Durkin, 99-100.

³⁰Ibid., 68.

³¹The Congressional Globe, Thirty-Fifth Congress, First Session, ed. John C. Rives, Vol. 47 (Washington, DC: Office of John C. Rives, 1858), 214-218.

³²Records of First Session of Congress of the Confederate States of America (Richmond: Government Printing office, 1862), 16.

³³Davis, 1:242.

³⁴Harrison Trexler, "Jefferson Davis and the Confederate Patronage," The South Atlantic Quarterly (January 1929): 46-47.

³⁵Fowler, 40-41.

³⁶Journal of the Congress of the Confederate States (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1903), 2:73 - 74.

CHAPTER 3

WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

With the approach of war, each man set out on different ventures in an attempt to recover from the initial disadvantage each inherited. Some of these ventures would prove successful and others failures. During this time, each man would be called on to deal with numerous people from outside his Department during his everyday activities. No position in government is ever a guarantee of continued employment, and with the job come those who would like to have the job or wish to make the incumbent look bad so they may further their own goals. During their tenure, Mallory and Welles had to deal with their fellow cabinet members, respective President, and especially Congresses in carrying out their duties as the Secretaries of the Navies.

When managing a Navy Department during a war, it can be expected that the opposition to policy will increase. This will usually happen because some people will not agree with a leader's course of action, and by using that leader as a "whipping boy" they hope to gain some type of advantage, either monetary or political. The background of the opposition was diverse within society, but the common thread was their interest in affecting each Secretary's actions.

Like their respective Presidents, Welles and Mallory had to deal with members of their respective cabinets throughout their tenure to carry on everyday business. Some of these dealings took place with no

animosity, while others became heated political battles for control of their own Department, access to the President and influence in their country's policies.

Accordingly, Gideon Welles was faced with dealing with cabinet members who were influential politically and had their own self-interest in mind when they made decisions. The way Lincoln ran his cabinet was, in its own way, responsible for the many intrigues that took place within his administration. Early on in Lincoln's administration, he established a routine of daily cabinet meetings to reveal his plans within the cabinet. After completing the meeting, he would go off to the side with individual cabinet members to discuss their ideas and plans. This encouraged attempts by individuals to play power broker in the administration.

Welles writes of his conversation with Salmon Chase, Secretary of the Treasury, concerning a cabinet-led attempt to remove General George McClellan as Commanding General of the Army of the Potomac. His views of Cabinet intrigue were:

I did not like, and could not unite in, the movement; that in a conference with the President I should have no hesitation in saying or agreeing mainly in what was there expressed [their letter]; for I am satisfied the earnest men of the country would not be willing McClellan should hereafter have command of our forces in the field, though I could not say what is the feeling of the soldiers. Reflection had more fully satisfied me that this method of conspiring to influence or control the President was repugnant to my feelings and was not right; it was unusual, would be disrespectful, and would justly be deemed offensive; that the President had called us around him as friends and advisers, with whom he might counsel and consult on all matters affecting the public welfare, not to enter into combinations to control him.¹

Although he had strained relationships at different times with most of his fellow cabinet members, his relationships with the Secretary of State William Seward and Chase set the tone of his participation in

Lincoln's administration. Within weeks of taking office, Welles' first political challenge was to take action against Seward, in order to keep him from meddling in the affairs of the Navy Department. Seward, the only other member of Lincoln's first cabinet to remain in office for the duration of the war, always thought of himself as the power behind the President and was never trusted by the other cabinet members.²

Welles' trouble with Seward started on 1 April 1862, when Welles was dining at the Willard's Hotel, where Welles lived, and Lincoln's private secretary, John Nicolay, delivered a package of instructions from the President to Welles. Welles was shocked at what he saw, because it involved internal naval matters that were normally directed by Welles.³

Welles was directed to keep the home squadron, comprising a majority of the operational ships, in the vicinity of Vera Cruz, Mexico, under the pretense that maintaining a senior officer in Vera Cruz was important to the United States foreign relations policy in that region and in Europe. The package of orders also directed that Captain Silas Stringham, Chief of the Bureau of Detail and Welles' senior naval advisor, was to proceed to Pensacola, Florida, to assume command of that portion of the home squadron, and that his position would be taken by Captain Samuel Barron, a Virginian.⁴

Realizing the effect that these changes would have on his immediate plans, especially the four-ship expedition to relieve Fort Sumter, Welles writes, "Without a moment's delay, I went to the President with the package in my hand."⁵ He found the President alone in his office, and when Welles arrived, the President asked, "What have I done wrong?"⁶ Welles expressed his surprise over the package's contents and

wanted an explanation for the President's apparent lack of confidence in him. Lincoln explained that Secretary Seward and several young men had brought some papers, apparently relating to some of Seward's various projects, for his signature. The President went on to explain that he had signed most of them without actually reading them because he was short of time and could trust Seward.⁷

By the time Welles took leave of the President he had received reassurances from the President that he had the utmost confidence in Welles and that he must disregard the package of instructions and especially the orders involving Barron and Stringham. Welles' thoughts at that time were that "Mr. Seward had been made a victim to an intrigue, artfully contrived by those who favored and were promoting the Rebellion."⁸ Those that he believed were to blame for misguiding Seward were Captain Barron, Captain Montgomery Meigs, USA; and Lieutenant David D. Porter, USN, a southerner and future Union naval hero of the Civil War.

Believing that the intrigue was finished, Welles continued preparations for the Sumter expedition with all the resources the Navy Department could muster. This expedition involved four ships, the Powhatan (flagship), Harriet Lane, Pawnee and Pocahontas, under the command of Gustavus Fox, a former U.S. naval officer and Welles' future assistant. The various ships were to set sail on April 6, 1861, and were to rendezvous off the coast of Charleston early on the morning of 11 April. The mission of the expedition was to provide needed supplies to the garrison in Fort Sumter by any means.⁹

Welles retired to his quarters on the evening of April 6, 1861, believing that his plan was proceeding without a hitch. At close to

midnight, Welles was visited by Secretary Seward and Seward's son Frederick with a telegram from Captain Meigs, commander of the army forces en route to Fort Pickens in Pensacola, requesting guidance from Seward because there were conflicting orders to the Powhatan from Welles. It was soon discovered that President Lincoln had ordered the command of the Powhatan turned over to Lieutenant D. Porter.

Soon Welles and Secretary Seward and Simon Cameron, Secretary of War, were at the White House attempting to sort out what happened. Seward was to remark that he had learned a lesson from this affair, and that was, that he "had better attend to his own business and confine his labors to his own Department."¹⁰ Welles quickly agreed with this statement. It was soon learned that Seward had organized a secret expedition to reinforce Fort Pickens, utilizing Naval and War Department assets, without informing Welles or Cameron.

During the meeting the President directed that the command of the Powhatan be returned to the Navy for utilization in the relief of Fort Sumter. But, by the time Seward finally sent the appropriate orders, the Powhatan had already sailed for Fort Pickens. Hindsight of the Sumter expedition shows that even if Powhatan had been with them, the ships would have arrived too late and would not have been able to pass the harbor defenses without incurring significant damage.

Consequently, Welles' original opinion of Seward had proven wrong: Seward had been the mastermind in the two unfortunate incidents. Welles' resulting view of Seward was:

He overrated his own powers always, and underestimated others. When he was sworn in to the office of Secretary, he expected and intended to occupy the place of premier, and undoubtedly supposed he could direct the Administration in every Department. Mr. Lincoln had,

he knew, little administrative experience. Mr. Seward, therefore, kindly and as a matter of course, assumed that he was to be the mastermind of the Government.¹¹

Although Welles soon helped Seward understand who was running the Navy Department, Seward's attempts at intrigue continued. When Secretary Cameron decided to leave the administration in 1862, it was Seward who convinced him to inform no one else but the President. When the President announced Cameron's resignation and the selection of Edwin Stanton as the new Secretary of War, Welles' views on the appointment were:

It was a surprise, not only to the country but to every member of the Administration but the Secretary of State, that Stanton was selected. He was doubtless the choice of Mr. Seward, who influenced the President and secured the appointment.¹²

Throughout the war, Seward and Welles found themselves at odds concerning how the United States should respond to various diplomatic claims by England against the Navy. The disputes ranged from how to handle the Trent Affair to the removal and disposition of mail from captured blockade runners or suspected runners. This relationship is best described by Welles:

State and Navy Departments run together; yet I am sometimes excessively annoyed and embarrassed by meddlesome intrusions and inconsiderate and unauthorized action by the Secretary of State. The Navy Department has, necessarily, greater intimacy, or connection, with the State Department than any other, for, besides international questions growing out of the blockade, our squadrons and commanders abroad come in contact with our ministers, consuls, and commercial agents, and each has intercourse with the Governments and representatives of other nations. Mutual understanding and cooperation are therefore essential and indispensable. But while I never attempt to direct the agents of the State Department, or think of it, or to meddle with the affairs in the appropriate sphere of the Secretary of State, an entirely different course is pursued by him as regards the Navy and naval operations. He [Seward] is anxious to direct, to be the Premier, the real Executive, and give away national rights as a favor.¹³

In contrast, Welles saw Chase, Secretary of the Treasury, as a man whose mistakes in managing the financial affairs of the United States and leniency on trade with elements of the Southern States during the war severely affected the war effort. Welles evaluates Chase as follows:

Mr. Chase, having committed blunders on his issues, is now desirous of retiring certain paper, and avails himself of funds of creditors on naval account to accomplish this. It is most unjust. The money honestly due to government creditors should not be withheld for Treasury schemes, or to retrieve its mistakes.

I am daily more dissatisfied with the Treasury management. Everything is growing worse. Chase, though a man of mark, has not the sagacity, knowledge, taste, or ability of a financier. Has expedients, and will break down the government. There is no one to check him. The President has surrendered the finances to his management entirely. Other members of the Cabinet are not consulted. Any dissent from, or doubts even, of his measures is considered as a declaration of hostility and an embarrassment of his administration. I believe I am the only one who has expressed opinions that questioned his policy, and that expression was mild and kindly uttered. Blair said about as much and both were lectured by Chase. But he knew not then, nor does he know now, the elementary principles of finance and currency. Congress surrenders to his capricious and superficial qualities as pliantly as the President and the Cabinet. If they do not legalize his projects, the Treasury is to be closed, and under a threat, or something approaching a threat, his schemes are sanctioned, and laws are made to carry them into effect; but woe awaits the country in consequence.¹⁴

Throughout the war, Welles was not afraid to challenge his colleagues in the cabinet over matters that were important to him. This held true for his relations with Chase, who instituted two policies that he didn't agree with: issuance of passes through the blockade and changing the national currency from coinage to paper.

Welles was opposed, on principle, to the whole scheme of the special permits to trade and had been from the time that Chase commenced it in May 1862. He refused to accept the policy because it circumvented the blockade and encouraged trading with the enemy, while carrying on the war. "Chase," Welles said, "was the first to broach and introduce this

corrupting and demoralizing scheme, and I have no doubt he expected to make political capital by it."¹⁵

In 1864, the Treasury Department gave General John Dix in Norfolk the ability to issue passes that allowed vessels to pass through the naval blockade. Welles refused to recognize any such practice unless it was ordered by Lincoln, because this licensed trade through the blockade was "corrupt" and allowed goods to flow into the Confederacy. To Welles this was nothing but a "scheme of permits" attached to special favors among the Treasury's agents and was an example of improper management of the Treasury Department.¹⁶

There followed a series of stern letters between the two Secretaries in which Welles proved, using the Treasury's own regulations, that some of the vessels given permits had been captured carrying contraband, and at least one was not under proper Treasury orders. "This circumstance," wrote Maunsell Field, Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, "greatly raised my estimate of Mr. Welles, and from subsequent intercourse with him I became convinced that he was one of the ablest, and in every respect one of the best of Mr. Lincoln's immediate advisors."¹⁷

Moreover, Welles believed that Chase's policy involving the departure from a specie standard and the adoption of an irredeemable paper currency would have devastating effects on the country. "This vitiation of the currency," Welles said, "is the beginning of evil,--a fatal mistake, which will be likely to overwhelm Chase and the Administration, if he and they remain here long enough."¹⁸ Welles writes, "In making Treasury notes or irredeemable paper of any kind a legal tender, and in flooding the country with inconvertible paper money down to a dollar and

fractional parts of a dollar, the Secretary of the Treasury may obtain momentary ease and comfort, but woe and misery will follow to the country."¹⁹ Throughout the period that Chase pushed these policies, Welles continued to argue against them during cabinet meetings and discussed them with President Lincoln.

Chase's financial dealings, involving problems over gold price versus paper money, proved to be his downfall. On 30 June 1864, under a storm of protest from the financial circles of the country, Chase resigned and was replaced by Senator William Fessenden, Chairman of the U.S. Senate Committee of Finance.²⁰

In contrast, politics in the Confederate cabinet seemed to be more subdued than in their counterpart in the North. President Davis' infrequently held cabinet meetings, furthermore, when they were held would last two to five hours and then would fail to cover subjects of importance to the Confederacy.²¹ Unlike Lincoln, Davis did not believe that it was necessary to assemble his cabinet to provide ideas and discuss matters of national interest; he preferred to have meetings with individual cabinet members. This lack of meetings reduced some of the interaction among the various cabinet members, but from a review of the Confederate Government's correspondence there does not appear to be a significant reduction in their interaction.

Davis encouraged cabinet members to visit him daily on matters of importance involving their respective departments. In addition, it was not uncommon for a number of the more significant members, Judah Benjamin, James Seddon, and Mallory, to travel with him to the battlefield or frequently dine with Davis at his home. This did encourage some attempts

by individuals to play power broker in the administration, but Davis was politically astute enough to minimize such attempts.

Consequently, Mallory was not bothered much by the types of intrigues Welles faced in the Union cabinet, but due to a more restricted availability of resources than Welles faced, Mallory had to work with cabinet members more closely in building cooperation and trust. Most of the Confederate cabinet positions experienced high turn-over rates, especially the Secretary of War and the Attorney General offices.

As in any cabinet, Mallory still had some difficulties in establishing working relationships with some of his fellow cabinet members. Over time, strain among some of these relationships developed, thus requiring him to defend the needs and plans of his Department. Of the various Departments in the Government, three had significant impact on the Naval Department: the State, War and Treasury Departments. The Secretaries of these departments who had the most impact included: Benjamin, Secretary of State; General LeRoy Walker and Seddon, two of the six Secretaries of War; and Christopher Memminger, Secretary Treasury.

Mallory's strongest relationship was with Judah Benjamin, who held three positions in the government during the War: Attorney General (1861 - 1862), temporary replacement for General Walker as Secretary of War until General George Randolph took over, and Secretary of State (1862 - 1865). Mallory and Benjamin were on more intimate and friendly terms than most in the cabinet, in part due to the relationship established while working together in the U.S. Senate during the 1850's,²² when both supported similar issues, which included defense of the Naval Retirement Board and support of the Kansas-Nebraska act. Whenever issues arose in

the Confederate cabinet, it was not unusual that Mallory and Benjamin would have similar views. They would frequently journey to the battlefields together.²³

Accordingly, when Mallory was being assailed by various elements wishing to blame him for the loss of New Orleans and failure of the Confederate Navy to break the blockade, it was Benjamin who came forward as one of Mallory's main defenders.²⁴ Together Benjamin and Mallory worked with the Confederate agents overseas to bring more material to the Southern cause, and played important roles in the Confederacy's attempt to acquire recognition by the international community.

Yet as the relationship with Benjamin was excellent, not all of Mallory's relationships within the cabinet were so good. Mallory had serious doubts about one member of Davis' cabinet, Secretary of War General LeRoy Walker. Walker was considered incompetent by most of the Confederate cabinet, and this view was enforced when Walker submitted a request on July 26, 1861, to the Confederate Congress for one-hundred and sixty-two million dollars and 400,000 men.²⁵ A request of this magnitude could be expected for the war effort, but Walker sent the request without consulting any of his colleagues. "If this course of separate action be pursued," Mallory says of Walker, "I must leave the Cabinet, as it subjects me, with others to misapprehension. I regard his call for this amt [amount] of men and money as wrong."²⁶

Walker's inability to work with the other members of the cabinet continued to alienate him from them. In September, when efforts to remove him from the War Department were building in Congress and the Cabinet, Mallory had no sympathy for his imminent departure. Mallory writes of the

lack of support, "We [Davis, Benjamin, Memminger and Mallory] all concurred in expressing a belief in the inability of Walker to perform the duties of that Department (of war), and the President added that he did not think that any civilian could. From the whole tenor of the conversation I look for a speedy resignation of General Walker."²⁷ Walker was eventually forced to resign on September 15, 1861.

A year and three Secretaries passed before General James Seddon was selected as Secretary of War. For over the two years that followed Seddon and Mallory worked closely. Their relationship was not always without conflict, but they considered each other friends, even to the point that Seddon was invited to the Mallory's home for "pea soup," which was oysters and champagne, along with other delicacies.²⁸

Yet, in their dealing with each other, neither was able to provide complete military support to the other. When Seddon's department complained about the lack of support from Naval forces in Galveston, he wrote Mallory saying, "Cannot harmony between the two branches of the service be secured with respect to this boat? If the navy objects to using it, and volunteers from the army are anxious to test it, may not the liberty be allowed?"²⁹ Mallory replied that he knew nothing of the boat referred to and had heard nothing of the disagreements from his men in Galveston and that he would refer the issue to the area commander with "appropriate suggestions looking to the public interest."³⁰

Furthermore, Secretary Mallory was ready and willing to support other departments in their endeavors. On one particular occasion, Colonel I. M. St John, of the Nitre and Mining Bureau, reported to Secretary Seddon that Mallory had "on several occasions after the loss of important

iron works, waived his own requisitions on the appeal of the Bureau;" and that throughout the war, naval officers had provided tremendous support to his Bureau with many items connected with the mining service.³¹

Another area of support, or the lack of it, dealt with the transfer of soldiers with maritime experience to the Confederate Navy. Despite a law passed by Congress that called for

All persons serving in the land forces of the Confederate States who shall desire to be transferred to the naval service, and whose transfer as seamen or ordinary seamen shall be applied for by the Secretary of the Navy, shall be transferred from the land to the naval service.³²

Referencing this, Mallory continuously called on Seddon to permit the transfer to take place. Seddon called for his commanders to permit soldiers to apply for the transfer, but left the final decision up to his regional commanders. This continued with little result. Mallory continued to push for the transfer of needed men, yet the only transfer of soldiers to the navy occurred March 22, 1864, and that was only because the Union fleet was threatening Mobile.³³

At the same time that Mallory and Seddon were resolving coordination problems between their respective services, Mallory had to find ways to deal with the inability of Christopher Memminger and the Treasury Department to provide monetary support to Mallory's efforts in building a fleet. On March 8, 1862, Mallory wrote to Davis, complaining that the failure of the Treasury Department "has been a source of great embarrassment to this Department and complaint of its creditors,"³⁴ because of its inability to pay. Mallory continuously brought up to Memminger the subject of paying the Department bills in a timely manner.

Part of the problem with the Confederate monetary system was that Congress had limited the a treasury to paying out 4.5 times as much in government bonds as in treasury notes.³⁵ Mallory was furious that navy bills were paid with government bonds, which the public considered useless, and in order to redeem them, they had to be sent to Richmond for payment and then payment sent to New Orleans.³⁶ These delays in payments ranged from 24 hours to forty days, and on several occasions resulted in the delay of work on the Mississippi and Louisiana in New Orleans.³⁷ In addition to the legal tender restriction, Congress had required Memminger to pay army bills first.

As the relationship within a governmental cabinet is tempered by the policies and procedures of the President, much the same is true when it comes to the development of individual relationships with the President himself. Throughout their administrations, Lincoln and Davis had created the framework that would impact on the longevity of cabinet members. This became especially true when the President decided whether or not to remove someone from a cabinet in order to appease opponents to his administration.

Both Welles and Mallory found themselves in a position to advise and influence their President. There are a number of recorded times when each spent a considerable amount of time in private with his President during crucial times of his country's history.

Welles' true position in the cabinet was apparent when Mark Howard, a Connecticut politician seeking a political appointment, claimed to have been the major influence on Lincoln in his selection of Welles as

the Navy Secretary. Lincoln provided those in attendance the story of Welles' selection:

The truth is and I may as well state the facts to you, for others know them, - on the day of the Presidential election, the operator of the telegraph in Springfield placed his instrument at my disposal. I was there without leaving, after the returns began to come in, until we had enough to satisfy us how the election had gone. This was about two in the morning of Wednesday. I went home, but not to get much sleep, for I then felt, as I never had before, the responsibility that was upon me. I began at once to feel that I needed support, others to share with me the burden. This was on Wednesday morning, and before the sun went down I had made up my Cabinet. It was almost the same that I finally appointed. One or two changes were made, and the particular position of one or two was unsettled. My mind was fixed on Mr. Welles as the member from New England on that Wednesday. Some other names passed through my thoughts, and some persons were afterwards pressed upon me, but the man and the place were fixed in my mind then, as it now is.³⁸

Lincoln had his mind set on Welles from the start and valued his openness, no matter whether it was in agreement with him or not. As an example, on July 13, 1862, Lincoln brought his plans for the Emancipation Proclamation to Seward and Welles first. His plan was to emancipate the slaves by proclamation if the Rebels did not cease in their war on the Government and the Union. "The subject involved consequences so vast and momentous," Seward said, "that he [Lincoln] should wish to bestow on it mature reflection before giving a decisive answer."³⁹ Welles was inclined to believe that the measure was justifiable and perhaps necessary.⁴⁰ They continued the discussion for some time, and came to the general conclusion that if it was to be used, then it should be used only when it became evident that the Rebel States could not be coerced, under the present conditions, to return to the Union.

Yet, when on September 25, 1862, Lincoln issued a proclamation on martial law that suspended the writ of habeas corpus throughout the Northern states, Welles did not know about it until after it was issued.

He questioned the "wisdom or utility of a multiplicity of proclamations"⁴¹ that went against the foundation of the country.

As a confidant to the President, Welles was able to influence the President to a point. Sometimes he succeeded, and sometimes he did not. Even though it seems that Seward held more sway over Lincoln than Welles in matters of state, yet Lincoln continued to seek out counsel from other cabinet members, especially Welles.

On July 14, 1863, after a cabinet meeting, Welles was en route to the War Department to see General Henry Halleck when President Lincoln hurriedly caught up to him. While walking toward the War Department, they discussed the recent events at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. The talk turned to the failure of General George Meade in continuing the pursuit of General Robert E. Lee's Confederate Army and Meade's allowing Lee to escape. The possibility that Lee's army was loose to plunder and still had the ability to fight was especially disheartening. Welles writes that Lincoln got very emotional during the conversation.⁴² The topic of Lincoln's conversation soon turned to Halleck and his not going to Meade to encourage or push him into action against Lee's forces. When Welles suggested that Halleck was not capable of carrying out the duties of General-in-Chief, Lincoln softened his stance by professing that Halleck was "better at such matters than him [Lincoln]."⁴³ Welles writes that:

I told the President I did not profess to be a military man, but there were some things on which I could form perhaps as correct an opinion as General Halleck, and I believed that he, the President, could more correctly, certainly more energetically, direct military movements than Halleck, who, it appeared to me, could originate nothing, and was as now, all the time waiting to hear from Meade, or whoever was in command.⁴⁴

Lincoln acknowledged Welles' words, but continued to express his support for Halleck, even though those same "shadows which have crossed my mind," writes Welles, "have clouded the President's also. On only one or two occasions have I ever seen the President so troubled, so dejected and discouraged."⁴⁵

When word of the victory at Vicksburg and Lee's escape reached Welles and Lincoln, Welles thought: "Had Meade attacked and captured the army above us, as I verily believe he might have done, the Rebellion would have been ended."⁴⁶ Nevertheless, Halleck remained as General-in-Chief of the Union forces, despite the lack of confidence in him throughout the cabinet. Even though Lincoln did not agree with Welles' advice concerning Halleck, the President continued to seek Welles' counsel on important issues throughout the war.

Likewise, Mallory's relationship with President Davis seems to have been one of the strongest in the Confederate Cabinet. Consequently, almost every time Mallory was attacked by Davis's political enemies, the President would quickly rally support to Mallory. In Davis' address to the Confederate States Congress on 18 November 1861, he said, "The Navy has also been effective in full proportion to its means. The naval officers, deprived to a great extent of an opportunity to make their professional skill available at sea, have served with commendable zeal and gallantry on shore and upon inland waters."⁴⁷

It was not uncommon for Mallory and Benjamin to spend considerable time with Davis, from dinner to trips to visits to various battlefields near Richmond. During the days prior to the Seven Days Campaign, near Mechanicsville along the Chickahominy River, Mallory and Davis spent three

days in and around the battlefields. They "watched the battle," Mallory wrote in his diary, "for hours and rode through a field skirted by woods in which were batteries of the enemy, shells repeatedly passed over and exploded beyond us."⁴⁸

No matter the problem, Davis always supported Mallory. Davis came to Mallory's defense during the investigation surrounding the fall of New Orleans. Davis viewed Mallory's actions leading up to the loss of New Orleans as extraordinary. He spoke of Mallory's dedication to finding and establishing a navy that could defend New Orleans and the Mississippi from Union influence and commended Mallory's "anxiety, in particular, to protect the city of New Orleans, whether assailed by fleets descending or ascending the river."⁴⁹

Mallory's strong sense of duty and responsibility was evident to the end. He accompanied President Davis during the days following the fall of Richmond. Mallory remained with Davis and provided counsel to his President a number of times during those days of sorrow. Ultimately, Mallory's sense of duty to family and the realization that the fight for the Southern cause was over led to a parting between Mallory and Davis. As they entered Georgia, Mallory announced to President Davis his "determination not to leave the country, and not to cross the Mississippi with him, for I [Mallory] regarded all designs and plans for continuing the war as wrong."⁵⁰ On May 2, 1865, Mallory handed Davis a brief note of resignation from the Government, took his leave of Davis and journeyed, with General Louis Wigfill and wife, toward Atlanta and La Grange in hope of reuniting with his wife and children, where he intended to await the final action of the United States government.⁵¹

In spite of difficulties with fellow cabinet members and their own President, some of Welles' and Mallory's most difficult challenges came from members of their respective Congresses. The Secretaries understood the practice of Senators and Congressmen coming to them to discuss the war effort and seeking such favors as political appointments, naval contracts, protection of business interests in their states, and military protection. Their standard dealings with their countries' political leaders did not end there, for both men were called before Congressional Committees that investigated the actions of their Departments and were faced with continuous harassment from several congressional members.

In particular, Welles' main opposition came from one individual, Senator John P. Hale of New Hampshire. Welles viewed Hale as:

A profligate politician, a poor Senator, an indifferent statesman, not without talents though destitute of industry, and I question his integrity. He has some humor, is fond of scandal, delights in defaming, loves to oppose, and is reckless of truth in his assaults. The country will sustain no loss from his retirement. As chairman of the Naval Committee and the organ of communication between the Navy Department and the Senate, he has rendered no service, but has been a constant embarrassment and obstruction. During the whole of this civil war, when all our energies and efforts were exerted in the cause of the Union and the country, no assistance, no word of encouragement even, has ever come to the Department from John P. Hale; but constant assaults, insinuations, and pronounced, if not wilful and deliberate, misrepresentation have emanated from him. Of course, I shall not regret his defeat, for though his term does not expire till the close of this Administration, and my connection with the Government may terminate at the same time, I am glad that his factious conduct is not endorsed by his State, and that the buffoon and vilifier will not be in a position to do further injury. He has been less offensive this session than heretofore, whether because he had become aware that his conduct did not meet the approval of the people and the election was at hand, I care not to judge.⁵²

In spite of pressure from Hale, Welles withstood demands for political favors, even though he himself had profited from the system under Presidents Jackson and Polk. He refused to yield to the demands of

Senator Hale for a navy depot in New Hampshire, even though the Senator headed the Naval Committee and could have made life easier for Welles; he made naval decisions based on the good of the Navy, not the desires of a politician. In a like manner, he urged a new navy yard be built at Philadelphia, despite pressure from his own state to locate it in New London, Connecticut.

On April 8, 1864, Mr. A. H. Rice, Chairman of the House Naval Committee, told Welles of a conversation Rice had had with Senator Hale. Rice explained that he had lectured Hale on the severity of his attacks against the Navy Department and Hale's professing to be a friend of the Administration, yet going out of his way to find fault with it. Hale confessed that he "had the most implicit confidence in the integrity and fidelity of Gideon Welles, but that he had no confidence in Mr. [Gustavus] Fox [Assistant Secretary of the Navy] or Admiral [Joseph] Smith [Chief of Bureau of Yards and Docks]." ⁵³

During the time that Senator Hale carried on his attacks, Welles refused to let his responses become personal. "I will not waste time," said Welles, "on a man like Hale." ⁵⁴ Many times Welles ignored the Senator and his tantrums, refusing to get involved in a Senatorial problem. "I have not, and shall not," said Welles, "ask the Senate to remove this nuisance out of their way and out of my way. They have witnessed his conduct and know his worthlessness in a business point of view; they know what is due to the country and to themselves, as well as to the Navy Department." ⁵⁵ Senator Hale's opposition to Welles' administration ended December 8, 1864, when he was voted out of the Senate Naval Committee. ⁵⁶

Likewise, Mallory had to continuously defend himself against those in the Confederate Congress that thought his ideas, plans, and political views were detrimental to their "cause." But where Welles faced major challenges within Lincoln's cabinet and United States Congress, Mallory's major threats came from the Confederate Congress.

Furthermore, most of Mallory's criticism came from Representative Charles M. Conrad of Louisiana, chairman of the House Committee on Naval Affairs. The charges of incompetence started almost from the moment that Mallory took over the Navy Department. Conrad believed Mallory had delayed in sending agents abroad to purchase supplies, and that he had been slow in the construction of ironclads when such delays were likely to prove fatal to the cause. Almost daily, Representative Conrad would visit with Mallory seeking information on the status of Mallory's plans for building ships and supporting the war effort.

The frequency of Conrad's charges increased after April 25, 1862, because on that day, Union naval forces under the command of Captains David Farragut and David Porter advanced up the Mississippi River, easily passing the Forts Jackson and St. Philip, to capture the city of New Orleans. The loss of this major seaport was crucial, but Confederate authorities were also forced to destroy the CSS Mississippi and CSS Louisiana after futile attempts to evacuate them failed. This was one of the most crucial blows to the Confederacy during the early days of the war. As the news of this defeat spread throughout the Confederacy, the enemies of the Davis administration, and especially the Louisiana members of the Confederate Congress, demanded an investigation of the plans for the defense of New Orleans and the destruction of the iron-clads.

On August 27, 1862, the Confederate Congress passed a resolution to form a Joint Select Committee of five Senators and five Congressmen to investigate the administration of the Navy Department "under its present head."⁵⁷ This investigation would center on the events leading up to and around the fall of New Orleans, and Mallory's ability to manage the Navy Department. A stroke of luck for Mallory happened when his friend Clement Clay, Representative from Georgia, was appointed to this committee as chairman and Conrad was left off the committee.

The Committee called a number of naval officers, contractors, local politicians and Representative Conrad to testify. When Conrad testified, he claimed to give specific instances that showed Mallory lacked the intelligence to manage the Navy Department.⁵⁸ Mallory ensured that the Navy Department's rebuttals to the various allegations were submitted promptly to the Committee chairman, Representative Clay.

Conrad testified that in August 1861, he had sponsored an act that was passed calling on President Davis to provide information concerning the defense of the Mississippi River. Then shortly after construction on Mississippi and Louisiana had started, Conrad met with Mallory a number of times, complaining about the lack of progress in construction funds. Before the Committee, Conrad declared that the financial difficulties encountered in New Orleans were Mallory's, because of his inability to get the Treasury to pay the bills.⁵⁹

Conrad said he was impressed with the Navy Department's conviction, but there was a "want of intelligence, and of energy,"⁶⁰ promptitude and forethought in the administration of the Navy Department. Conrad also criticized Mallory for being slow in sending out agents to

Europe and not being receptive to acquiring the Manassas, a privately-built ironclad ram constructed by John Stevenson.⁶¹

However, under Representative Clay's questioning, Conrad was forced to deny knowledge of a number of Mallory's initiatives, when confronted by Clay. The initiatives included: sending Captain Raphael Semmes and Lieutenant James North to Northern cities to buy ships in March 1861; sending an agent to Canada in May 1861 for ships; sending agents to New Orleans to purchase steamers in March 1861; and in April 1861, signing a contract with Leeds & Co. of New Orleans and J. R. Anderson & Co. of Richmond to make guns.⁶²

Conrad had claimed that Mallory had expressed a lack of confidence in ironclad rams, yet in a May 8, 1861, in a letter to Conrad, Mallory had given the historical details of armored ship testing by Britain, France and the United States, including data on the French Navy's building program for iron ships from 1853 - 1854. Mallory went on to say:

The most formidable wooden frigate would be powerless in contest with such a ship; and the employment of iron-clad ships by one naval power, must compel every other to have them, without regard to cost, or to occupy a position of known or admitted inferiority upon the sea. . . . I regard the possession of an iron-armored ship, as a matter of the first necessity. Such a vessel at this time could traverse the entire coast of the United States, prevent all blockades, and encounter, with a fair prospect of success, their entire navy.⁶³

Mallory explained that the initial cost of ironclad rams would be expensive, but over the next five years the money saved would be tremendous because the ships were only one-fourth the size of a steamer, provided excellent crew protection and would be cheaper to discard (i.e. sale for scrap).⁶⁴

When the Committee made its final report, it had the following to say concerning Mallory's actions:

The testimony does not furnish any sufficient ground for imputing, the short-coming, failures and disasters of our navy to the Secretary. On the contrary, it shows that he has been vigilant, industrious and energetic, in employing the means within his power to purchase and to build a navy. One of his first acts, after entering upon his duties, was to call the attention of Congress to the rapid and radical changes in naval warfare which had taken place within a few years, in displacing the "wooden wall" that had been relied on for attack or defense, with gigantic iron-clads. . . .

. . . Taking into consideration the property of our means and the formidable naval power and boundless resources of our enemy's at the beginning of the war, our people have no sufficient cause for shame or discouragement in the operations of our navy. What has been and is being done to resist the enemy on the waters of our rivers and on the sea, should inspire confidence and excite strong hope that our navy will yet prove an efficient and worthy ally of our noble armies in achieving our independence. It has already won the admiration and applause of neutral nations for its gallant and glorious achievements. And if we should succeed in getting into service the war vessels completed and in progress of construction, the committee believe that our naval triumphs will yet rival the heroic and brilliant achievements of our land forces.⁶⁵

Mallory still faced opposition in Congress from Conrad and his allies, but Mallory continued to do his job the way he best saw fit.

Both Welles and Mallory demonstrated outstanding diplomatic and leadership skills in working with the politicians of their administrations and were firm in actions involving subordinates. They each played a significant role as a stabilizing influence, first by remaining in office for the duration of the war, secondly by serving as friend and advisor to their respective Presidents, and lastly by being able to rebut Congressional opposition to them. Their advice and opinions were welcomed by each one's President and fellow cabinet members.

Despite claims by some of the opposition, neither man was one to just rubber stamp a policy or document. The character of these men demanded that they perform their duties for the cause that they believed in, not just to make someone else happy. Neither Welles nor Mallory was

the type to take the blame for others' failures well. They ensured that all of the facts were above board, but they were not ones to "point fingers," nor did they believe in passing the buck when they were responsible for errors.

Endnotes

¹Gideon Welles, Diary of Gideon Welles, Secretary of the Navy Under Lincoln and Johnson, ed John T. Morse (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1911), 1:101-102.

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³Ibid., 1:16.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid., 1:17..

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid., 1:18.

⁸Ibid., 1:21.

⁹Ibid., 1:22-23.

¹⁰Ibid., 1:24.

¹¹Ibid., 1:37.

¹²Ibid., 2:57-58.

¹³Ibid., 1:132.

¹⁴Ibid., 2:59-60.

¹⁵Ibid., 2:257-258.

¹⁶Ibid., 1:166.

¹⁷Niven, Gideon Welles: Lincoln's Secretary of the Navy, 463.

¹⁸Welles, 1:148.

¹⁹Ibid., 1:167 - 168.

²⁰Ibid., 2:60.

²¹Stephen R. Mallory, Diary of Stephen R. Mallory, 2 vols, May 30, 1861 to September 1865, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina Library, Chapel Hill, N.C., 1:10-13.

²²Durkin, 227.

²³Clifford Dowdey, Experiment in Rebellion (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1947), 359.

²⁴Rembert Patrick, Jefferson Davis and His Cabinet (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1944), 256.

²⁵Mallory, 1:10.

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²⁷Ibid., 1:14 - 15.

²⁸Durkin, 229.

²⁹U.S. Navy Department, Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in The War of the Rebellion, Series I (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1894), 45:2:735.

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³³Thomas Scharf, History of the Confederate States Navy from it's Organization to the Surrender of its Last Vessel (New York: Rogers & Sherwood, 1882), 41.

³⁴U.S. Navy Department, Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in The War of the Rebellion, Series II (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1921), 1:714.

³⁵Joint Select Committee to Investigate the Management of the Navy Department, 27 August 1862 to 24 March 1863 (Richmond: Confederate States of America, 1863), 352.

³⁶U.S. Navy Department, Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in The War of the Rebellion, Series II, 1:714.

³⁷Durkin, 174.

³⁸Welles, 1:81-82.

³⁹Welles, 1:70.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Welles, 1:150.

⁴²Welles, 1:371.

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷U.S. War Department, The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, Series IV (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1900), 1:734.

⁴⁸Mallory, 21-22.

⁴⁹Davis, 2:230.

⁵⁰Stephen R. Mallory, "Last days of the Confederate Government, from papers left by Stephen R. Mallory, Secretary of the Navy in the Confederate Cabinet", McClure's Magazine (Vol. 16 1900-1), 247.

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²Welles, 2:52.

⁵³Welles, 2:6.

⁵⁴Welles, 1:308.

⁵⁵Welles, 1:384.

⁵⁶Welles, 2:193.

⁵⁷Joint Select Committee, 3.

⁵⁸Ibid., 329.

⁵⁹Ibid., 329-332.

⁶⁰Ibid., 331.

⁶¹Ibid., 333-334.

⁶²Ibid., 355.

⁶³Ibid., 359.

⁶⁴Ibid.

⁶⁵Report of Joint Select Committee Confederate States Congress of America, Investigation of the Administration of the C.S. Navy Department, 27 August 1862 to 24 March 1863, Final Report, 4-6.

CHAPTER 4

ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS

In running the Navy Department, it is important that a Secretary have the foresight to establish policies and procedures to permit the naval organization to operate effectively during a war. These policies must involve departmental organization and reorganization, standards for the officer corps and civilian employees, and general personnel management.

In establishing these policies the Secretary of Navy improves the Navy's effectiveness and lessens the possibility that the Secretary could be removed because of the ineffectiveness of his Department. When Mallory and Welles took over their respective country's Navy Department, each had to make decisions dealing with the organization and personnel matters of their department.

They administered their Departments almost entirely independently of Cabinet consultation, and almost without direction of their Presidents, who not only gave them their confidence but also entrusted all naval matters to them. For example, Welles read to Lincoln only one of his letters of instruction to his commanding officers, and that was the letter for the Sumter expedition.¹ Welles and Mallory strongly believed in civilian control of the military versus military control, unlike both War Departments, over which the Generals had substantially more control.

In his annual report to Congress, Welles provided an opportunity to see how he viewed his responsibilities as Secretary of the Navy:

In discharging the duties that pertain to this Department, and which have devolved upon it during the brief period it has been entrusted to my hands, I have shrunk from no responsibilities; and if, in some instances, the letter of the law has been transcended, it was because the public necessities required it. To have declined the exercise of any powers but such as were clearly authorized and legally defined, when the government and the country were assailed and their existence endangered, would have been an inexcusable wrong and a cowardly omission. When, therefore, the Navy was called into requisition to assist not only in maintaining the Constitution and to help execute the laws, but to contribute in upholding the Government itself against a great conspiracy, I did not hesitate, under your direction, to add to its strength and efficiency by chartering, purchasing, building, equipping, and manning vessels, expanding the organization and accepting the tender of services from patriotic individuals, although there may be no specific legal enactment for some of the authority that has been exercised.²

When Welles took over the Navy Department, he had to make a number of changes to the leadership of the various bureaus. Welles was fortunate that a majority of the bureau chiefs had held their positions since the early fifties, and most of the clerks had been in their office for over ten years.³ His Bureau Chiefs were Captain Joseph Smith, Yards and Docks; Captain Horatio Bridge, Provisions and Clothing; Dr. William Whelan, Medical; and Captain John Lenthall, Construction, Equipment, and Repair.

Due to the resignation of Southerners, Welles was required to fill two important billets: Ordnance Bureau Chief and Assistant Construction, Equipment, and Repair Bureau Chief. Welles initially appointed Commander John Dahlgren as the acting Chief of Ordnance and Commandant of the Washington Navy Yard, but Dahlgren was unable to handle the administrative responsibility of a Bureau Chief. Dahlgren was replaced by Captain Andrew Harwood as Bureau Chief but retained as Commandant of the Navy Yard. This was an excellent decision, because Dahlgren was not able to handle the

Bureau effectively, yet keeping Dahlgren in Washington gave Welles another excellent advisor to himself and someone else from the Navy that Lincoln could trust.

The appointment of the Assistant Bureau Chief for Construction, Equipment, and Repair was important because Welles broke tradition by appointing a junior officer to the job. By appointing Engineer-in-Chief Benjamin Isherwood, Welles put the best man available into the position. Isherwood was considered one of the best and most controversial naval engineers of his time. The combination of Lenthall and Isherwood proved to be quite adaptive to the rapid changes needed for the Navy during this time of conflict.⁴

In 1862 Welles added three Bureaus to the Department, in order to ensure better distribution of labor. The addition of the Bureaus of Recruiting and Equipment, Medicine, and Steam Engineering and Navigation increased the Bureaus to a total of eight.

Unlike Welles, who started with an established Navy Department, Mallory not only had to locate ships and arm them, but he also had to organize his department from nothing. Mallory brought with him an understanding of the U.S. Navy Department, which he had gained while Chairman of the U.S. Senate Naval Affairs Committee in the 1850's. With this experience as the blueprint, Mallory set out to establish the Confederate Navy Department in March of 1861.

In establishing the Department, Mallory created a single Controlling Bureau that would have under its general supervision four operational departments. The Office of Orders and Detail, under Captain Lawrence Rousseau, was responsible for matters relating to personnel. A

second Bureau, the Office of Ordnance and Hydrography, under Commander John Brooke, was charged with providing munitions, nautical instruments and charts. The Office of Provisions and Clothing, under Commander John De Bree, dealt with food, clothing and pay. Finally, Mallory's concern for the men's health care was handled by the Office of Medicine and Surgery, under Dr. W. A. W. Spotswood.⁵

Mallory's Controlling Bureau consisted of the Secretary and two chief aides. His top advisors were Ed Tiball and Commodore French Forrest, both from Virginia. It was through this Bureau that many of the plans and directives for the Confederate Navy originated. In 1862, by direction of Mallory, a fifth department, the Torpedo Bureau, was placed under the authority of the Controlling Bureau. The Torpedo Bureau became the central authority for the development and deployment of "torpedoes" (mines) and other underwater devices.

Equally important was the method that Welles and Mallory used in handling the officer corps of their navies. For a navy to be successful during war time, it must be commanded by the best people available. The Navy Secretary must be willing and able to put the navy in a position to succeed by placing men of capability in positions of authority. Historically the United States Navy had become top heavy with senior officers, many of whom had been on the job in excess of thirty years.

Another important factor in development of the officer corps is keeping those senior officers appeased, while putting those with better qualities, although junior, into key positions. Many officers in the Navy at this time had received political favors and were associated closely with their respective Congressmen. Welles and Mallory had to take these

factors into consideration when making assignments and removing officers from positions in which they had not performed well.

Indeed, Welles made it clear from the outset that his decisions were not going to be bound by the consideration of rank in choosing flag officers, but sought out those who proved themselves to be the best talents in the naval service and gave them the opportunity. After William D. Porter was passed over for Commodore by the selection board, Welles went to Lincoln and got him to approve the appointment anyway. He did this because W. Porter had sunk the Confederate armored ram Arkansas, when none of the senior officers was able to do so. Welles considered him a "bold, brave man, but reckless in many respects and unpopular in the service." He was an excellent officer.⁶

To handle the problem of old and ineffective officers, Welles supported using a Naval Retiring Board. On August 3, 1861, the Board was authorized by an act of Congress. Under this act any officer with over forty years of service or over sixty-two years of age was placed on a list of retired officers. Then at Welles' urging, a more expanded act became law on December 21, 1861; under this act "any naval officer whose name had been borne on the Naval Register forty-five years, or who had attained the age of sixty-two years, shall be retired from active service and his name be entered on the retired list of officers of the grade to which he belonged."⁷ Under this act the President, "by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, was authorized to detail retired officers to active duty, and they might on receiving a vote of thanks from Congress, upon the recommendation of the President, be restored to the active list, and not otherwise."⁸

Another problem with the Union officer corps was the difficulty in determining who Welles could rely on. After years of brawling in local politics, Welles had become a suspicious man; he simply did not trust many of those around him, and to compound the situation, even though over twenty-five percent of the pre-war officer corps had gone South, there was still a large number of Southern naval officers, who sympathized with the Southern Cause, remaining. Welles found it difficult to trust these men and rarely placed them in positions of confidence, even though a large number of them were some of the better officers that the navy had available.⁹

Important leadership traits that Welles expected in his senior officers were competence, determination and ingenuity. A review of the court martial of Commander John Downes, of the R. R. Cuyler, gives an insight into Welles' standards. The Cuyler ran short of fuel, and Downes, instead of using the Cuyler's sails and striving to get into port, proceeded to dismantle his vessel, burning his spars, gun-carriages, caissons, and other equipment vital to the war effort. Without authority, Downes then bought lumber from a merchant vessel on its way to Cuba. After all of this, Downes sent in a dispatch complaining of his engineer's incompetency. Downes requested to bring his engineer up for court martial and never once took the responsibility, as commanding officer, for any portion of the incident.¹⁰ "That his engineer was in fault is doubtless true," Welles said, "but the commander must make himself acquainted with the condition of his vessel and its equipment."¹¹

Equally important, Welles expected his officers to be aggressive in carrying out their duties. These men were to concentrate on the job at

hand and not worry about the monetary gain that could come from capturing blockade runners. On August 25, 1864, Welles became enraged over the inability of his commanders to capture the Rebel raider Tallahassee.

Welles wrote:

Most of the vessels sent out in pursuit of the Tallahassee have returned, and with scarcely an exception the commanders have proved themselves feeble and inefficient. Imputations of drunkenness and of disloyalty or of Rebel sympathy are made against some of them. As usual, there may be exaggerations, but there is some truth in some of the reports.¹²

Moreover, Welles' method in dealing with Admiral David Porter, Admiral Samuel Du Pont, and Gustavus Fox demonstrated his leadership style and philosophy toward his officers. They were successful from the start and quickly gained Welles' trust, but each of these men had various flaws. Welles handled each one differently, based on one factor: Success!

Consequently, Porter became Welles' most effective officer, when in all reality he should have been disciplined and relegated to a minor role due to his involvement in the Powhatan affair (discussed in chapter three) at the start of the War. President Lincoln still believed that the Fort Pickens' expedition and the attempt to thrust Captain Samuel Barron into the position as Chief of the Bureau of Detail was the fault of Porter rather than Seward, and he never thereafter put full confidence in Porter, though he was well aware of his professional ability. Many times during the War, Welles had to personally defend Porter's qualities himself. "He [Porter] is selfish, presuming, and wasteful," said Welles, "but is brave and energetic." Seward refused to give him any credit.¹³

When Welles had to relieve Captain Charles Davis, he appointed Porter as the Western Flotilla Commander on October 1, 1862. Porter at that time was only a Commander, and Welles expected officers senior to

Porter to be dissatisfied and to cause problems.¹⁴ In explaining the reasoning behind replacing Davis with Porter, Welles said:

He has, however, stirring positive qualities, fertile in resources, has great energy, excessive and sometimes over scrupulous ambition, is impressed with and boastful of his own peers, given to exaggeration in relation to himself. . . . He has not the conscientious and high moral qualities of Foote [Welles' friend] to organize the flotilla, and is not considered by some of our best naval men a fortunate officer; has not in his profession, though he may have personally, what the sailors admire, "luck." It is a question, with his mixture of good and bad traits, how he will succeed. His selection will be unsatisfactory to many, but his field of operation is peculiar, and a young and active officer is required for the duty to which he is assigned; it will be an incentive to juniors. If he does well I shall get no credit; if he fails I shall be blamed. Davis, whom he succeeds, is more of a scholar than sailor, has gentlemanly instincts and scholarly acquirements, is an intelligent but not an energetic, driving, fighting officer, such as is wanted for rough work on the Mississippi;--recklessness perhaps is the better word,--of Porter.¹⁵

Welles continued to give Porter commands and promotions. Lincoln "expressed his gratification that I retained no resentment," said Welles, "but sacrificed personal wrongs and injustice for the good of the country."¹⁶ Porter would become renowned as one of the greatest naval officers that the Union had. He was the only officer of the Navy to receive, on three different occasions, recognition from Congress for his brilliant achievements.¹⁷ By keeping an open mind, Secretary Welles was able to retain and utilize Porter's knowledge and abilities during the Civil War, a war in which Porter proved himself to be one of the Navy's greatest leaders.

As to Captain Barron, several weeks after Seward attempted to place him in the Bureau of Orders and Detail and keep the home squadron in the vicinity of Vera Cruz, Barron resigned his commission and went to Richmond. Once there, he received a commission in the Confederate Navy from Stephen Mallory. In August 1861, he was taken prisoner when Fort

Hatteras was captured by Rear-Admiral Silas Stringham, the officer whom he was to replace as Bureau Chief. As to the Porter connection with Barron, "Whether Porter was prompted by any of his Rebel associates to intrigue for Barron [to place him in the Bureau of Orders and Detail]," Welles said, "or whether they concerted with him to that end, I never ascertained. The facts will probably never be known."¹⁸

In contrast, Rear Admiral Du Pont began the Civil War in favor with Welles. Du Pont was "a skillful and accomplished officer," said Welles, "a courtier with perhaps too much finesse and management, resorts too much to extraneous and subordinate influences to accomplish what he might easily attain directly. Given to personal and naval clanship."¹⁹

Du Pont, as the Commander of the South Atlantic Squadron, was a key factor in the capture of Port Royal, South Carolina, in November 1861. Du Pont's success continued, and the decision was made in October 1862 to capture Charleston. Du Pont spent several months collecting the forces he needed for his assault against Charleston, including a number of ironclads. Yet early in 1863 both Lincoln and Welles became concerned that Du Pont's delay in attacking was giving the Confederates time to improve the city's defenses. During February and March 1863 Welles corresponded with Du Pont a number of times encouraging him to start the operation.

Finally, on April 7, 1863, Du Pont conducted his attack against Charleston. The monitors bombarded the coastal forts for over forty minutes and when it appeared that there was no reduction in the rate of fire from the coastal batteries, Du Pont had the ironclads withdraw.

Seven of the nine monitors were damaged;²⁰ one man was killed and 12 wounded.²¹

After Du Pont's defeat at the mouth of the Charleston harbor, Welles quietly rebuffed him for not informing the Navy Department of the city's fortifications and his plans to overcome them. Welles was disappointed when he found out that Du Pont had never believed an attack on Charleston was such a good idea, even though Lincoln and Welles had been talking and pushing it for months. Also, 37 days after the initial attack, Welles had yet to receive any recommendation on future operations.²²

Toward the end of May, Welles began to suspect that Du Pont was "deranged."²³ Finally, on May 23, 1863, fearing that Du Pont had turned into another McClellan, someone who would do nothing until he had overwhelming odds against the Confederates, Welles decided he needed a new commander. With this decision, Welles postponed planned naval attacks until a new commander was in place. Welles took a considerable amount of time, six days, before deciding on Admiral Andrew Foote to relieve Du Pont.²⁴

Finally, on June 3, 1863, Welles sent word to Du Pont that he was to be relieved, because he continued to oppose plans for a renewed attack on Charleston. Another factor in Du Pont's relief was his continued inability to communicate with Washington and especially his failure to respond to letters from Lincoln.²⁵ However, Foote became ill in early June and eventually died on June 26, 1863.²⁶ Therefore, Du Pont was relieved in July 1863 by Admiral John Dahlgren.

Equally important, one of Welles' most trusted assistants was Gustavus Vasa Fox, a Massachusetts business man and former United States naval officer. Fox not only brought with him an excellent talent for organization and planning, but also had influence within the administration. His wife's sister was married to Montgomery Blair, Lincoln's Postmaster General.

Originally Welles did not want to have Fox as his chief clerk, because Welles wanted to appoint his own man, William Faxon, to the post. Faxon had been a member of Welles' Hartford circle and was a close personal confidant. Knowing he had to pacify Fox and Blair, Welles convinced Lincoln that Fox should be reinstated at his old naval rank and given a command of his choice, but Blair strongly opposed the offer. Using his easy access to the President, Blair told Lincoln that posting Fox to command at sea would be a "waste of his talent for organization" and that Fox was needed to "fight the bureaucratic battles of the Potomac."²⁷ Lincoln agreed and suggested to Welles to reconsider Fox. Welles' problem was solved on July 24, 1861, when Congress authorized the position of Assistant Secretary of the Navy. Fox was nominated by Welles for the Assistant Secretary of the Navy and Faxon for Chief Clerk. Fox's knowledge of naval affairs, contacts with the Blair family made him a valuable asset to Welles.²⁸

However, throughout Welles' administration there was strong opposition to Fox from politicians and naval officers. When on January 30, 1865, Welles learned from Admiral David Farragut that Fox had substituted his own name for Welles' in a number of communications to various senior officials, Welles' response was:

I have, on one or two occasions detected something similar in Fox in regard to important orders,--where he had been intrusive or obtrusive, evidently to get his name in the history of these times, and perhaps to carry the impression that he was at least a coadjutor with the Secretary in naval operations. . . . He commits some mistakes which cause me trouble, and it is one of his infirmities to shun a fair and honest responsibility for his own errors. This is perhaps human nature, and therefore excusable. With the Naval officers he desires to be considered all-powerful, and herein is another weakness. But he is familiar with the service and has his heart in its success.²⁹

In a like manner, Mallory had to deal with the problem of how to promote officers based on their performance, not their seniority. First using his authority as Secretary of the Navy, Mallory permitted officers to retain their former ranks from the United States Navy. Then, at Mallory's urging, the Confederate Congress passed an act in which promotion was based solely on "gallant or meritorious conduct during the war." This permitted Mallory to push ahead those officers that were best suited to lead the new Confederate Navy, yet it minimized the conflicts that might have come if he simply bypassed the lesser-qualified senior officers.

Mallory went further in his efforts to keep the old officers appeased. In May 1863, Congress passed an act that in effect created two navies: the Provisional Confederate Navy and the Regular Navy. The Provisional Navy was manned by the younger and more competent officers, thus these men could command vessels afloat and by their aggressive actions progressed in rank quickly. Now the Regular Navy was made up of the older officers, who still progressed in rank within their respective service, but could not perform duties afloat unless they were transferred to the Provisional Navy.³⁰

Therefore, Mallory was seeking officers that he could trust to do the job assigned and be loyal to the department. Captain Victor Randolph

initially met this requirement. When Randolph arrived in Richmond, he expected a key job within the Navy Department at Richmond, because he wanted to establish political contacts within the government. During his first days in Richmond, Randolph became involved with a group of politicians that considered Mallory disloyal to the Southern cause. While making initial naval assignments, Mallory decided to send Randolph to Mobile, because he believed Randolph could improve the Mobile defenses and to keep him out of the Richmond politics, especially those dealing with Mallory.

Initially Mallory was pleased with the progress that Randolph had achieved, but he started to oppose Mallory's shipbuilding plans and complained that he couldn't defend Mobile without ironclads. After a number of communications with State and city officials in which Randolph implied there was a lack of effectiveness in the Navy Department's policies, Mallory removed him. Mallory's cited reasons for the removal were Randolph's ineptitude and lack of initiative when he failed to at least harass the Union blockade ships. Randolph was relieved by Admiral Franklin Buchanan, Commander of the Merrimack/Virginia. Mallory ordered Randolph back to Richmond for court-martial.³¹

Likewise, when Commodore Josiah Tattnal was unable to retreat up the James River with the Merrimack/Virginia and was forced to destroy the vessel on May 10, 1862, to prevent her capture by Union forces, Mallory was incensed by what he thought was incompetence and insubordination. Tattnal never notified Mallory of his decision to destroy the Merrimack/Virginia. "The destruction of the Virginia [Merrimack]," said

Mallory, "was premature. May God protect us and cure us of weakness and folly!"³²

A court of inquiry into the loss of the Merrimack/Virginia expressed doubts over the necessity of destroying her. At Tattnal's request, Mallory had him brought up before a court martial, at which he was acquitted.³³ Accepting the military court's ruling and at the urging of Admiral Buchanan, Mallory then transferred the Commodore to Savannah, to take control of the Naval defenses between Charleston and Savannah. Tattnal renewed Mallory's confidence in him by continuously harassing the Union fleet at in the area from Savannah to Port Royal and by preventing Union Forces from entering Savannah until January 17, 1865.³⁴

Likewise, Mallory's way of handling Admiral Franklin Buchanan and Lieutenant Beverly Kennon provides an insight into his leadership style and philosophy toward his officers. These men provide a spectrum of success and responsibility in which to view Mallory's actions within his Department. Like Welles, Mallory handled each with the ultimate goal of achieving success for the Confederate Navy in mind.

Mallory had great confidence in Admiral Franklin Buchanan, who became a trusted advisor to Mallory and one of the heros of the young navy. Buchanan became the Chief of Office of Details and Orders in May 1861 and became a key advisor on the Controlling Board for almost a year. On February 24, 1862, Mallory gave command of the James River Squadron, including command of the new ironclad Merrimack/Virginia, to Buchanan.³⁵

As commanding officer of the Merrimack/Virginia, Buchanan was responsible for finishing the ironclad and preparing her for immediate operations against a strong Union force. During the final weeks of

construction, Mallory communicated with Buchanan several times concerning how best to utilize the ironclad in battle and inquired into the possibility of sending the vessel to conduct operations against New York City.³⁶

On March 8, 1862, Buchanan sailed the Merrimack/Virginia into Hampton Roads, Virginia, with the intention of lifting the Union blockade of Norfolk. During the first day of battle, the Merrimack/Virginia sank two ships, the USS Cumberland and the USS Congress, and stood up under the combined fire of the Federal floating and shore batteries. The next day when the Merrimack/Virginia battled the USS Monitor, the Union's first seagoing ironclad, neither ship was able to destroy the other, and they achieved a tactical stalemate.

Buchanan and his men were recognized with a Congressional resolution of thanks for their successful attack against Union forces in Hampton Roads.³⁷ Mallory's view of Buchanan's success follows:

It will be remembered that the Virginia was a novelty in naval architecture, wholly unlike any ship that ever floated; that her heaviest guns were equal novelties in ordnance; that her motive power and her obedience to her helm were untried, and her officers and crew strangers comparatively to the ship and to each other; and yet, under all these disadvantages, the dashing courage and consummate professional ability of Flag-Officer Buchanan and his associates achieved the most remarkable victory which naval annals record.³⁸

Hence, Mallory promoted Buchanan to Admiral for his "gallant" command of the Merrimack/Virginia and the James River Squadron during the battle of Hampton Roads.³⁹ Mallory, in need of a quality officer, ordered Buchanan to take command of the Mobile defense.

While at Mobile, Buchanan improved the coastal defenses and carried out a series of harassing attacks against the blockading Federal force. Due to Buchanan's presence, the Union force was more careful, in anticipation

of more attacks. When Admiral David Farragut entered Mobile Bay on August 5, 1864, Buchanan was stationed on the ram Tennessee. Tennessee and a small Confederate force aggressively attacked the Union force of eighteen ships,⁴⁰ until the Confederate naval forces were forced to surrender. Buchanan was wounded during the engagement and subsequently captured when the Tennessee surrendered.

One of Mallory's major detractors, Lieutenant Beverly Kennon, came from within the Navy Department. Kennon had been assigned to New Orleans with the responsibility to acquire ordnance and related material for the Confederate navy, Fort St Philip and Fort Jackson. Kennon's actions were a key in initially establishing an ordnance depot and a small gun-casting facility. It was during this time that Kennon took it upon himself to purchase items in excess, because he had anticipated their price going up. When the excesses of his purchases were identified, \$500,000, Mallory considered it incompetency, not initiative, since Kennon had not notified the Department.

Action against Kennon was swift; Mallory ordered him to Richmond for the purpose of transferring him to the CSS Patrick Henry. On hearing this, Kennon appealed to Admiral Franklin Buchanan, Office of Orders and Detail, who refused to hear Kennon out and told him to "obey orders."⁴¹ Kennon resigned his commission rather than take "a Second Lieutenancy in the CSS Patrick Henry, when his junior officers had a higher command."⁴² For several months after his resignation, he petitioned President Davis and Mallory to permit him to withdraw his resignation; both denied it. Kennon was later offered another lieutenant's appointment, but declined because he "was assigned rank at the foot of the list for lieutenants."⁴³

On September 19, 1862, Kennon testified before the Joint Select Committee, investigating the administration of the C.S. Navy Department, and claimed that Mallory was stingy when it came to providing his subordinates with funds adequate to their duties. Kennon also complained that he had been badly treated by Buchanan and Mallory.

Mallory was quick to rebut the allegations with solid arguments of his own. Kennon had been found to possess three faults: insubordination, extravagant official expenditures, and too much drinking.⁴⁴ During his testimony, Kennon admitted he had an aversion to making formal requests and reports, that he had what he thought to be Captain George Hollins' permission for the excessive expenditures, and that although he did have a reputation for being a hard drinker,⁴⁵ drinking never interfered with the quality of his job performance.

So, as the evidence suggests, both Welles and Mallory were adept at handling personnel matters. In addition, a good Navy Secretary has to take care of his men. Welles and Mallory both put the welfare of the seaman high on their list of Departmental goals. They were actively involved in health care, provisions and prisoner exchanges.

Equally important to Welles and Mallory was the well-being of the serviceman. Welles made it clear to Rear-Admiral John Dahlgren that it was important to provide for the officers and men on ironclads. Welles directed that the men should be relieved from time to time by men on board the more comfortable vessels. He stressed that the favorable effect on the health of all and improvements of those on the ironclads would improve the effectiveness of those men. At the direction of Welles, a large steamer was acquired that had ample accommodations, and he assigned it to

the Charleston squadron. The vessel was used for the accommodation of the men of the reserve forces that were used to relieve the ironclad crews.⁴⁶

Furthermore, relying on his experience from his tour in the Bureau of Provisions and Clothing, Welles immediately started to improve distribution of food supplies and special issues of clothing. Welles went before Congress to campaign for improved benefits for those serving in the War.

In a like manner, Mallory, who had been known for his support of the American seamen, as a U.S. Senator, sought ways to take care of the enlisted men. Mallory campaigned before the Confederate Congress for additional benefits for men serving and for those disabled in the line of duty. One of his important congressional victories came in April 1863, when the Confederate Congress authorized a clothing issue for enlisted men in the Navy.⁴⁷

Medical care for the Confederate sailor was important to Mallory. Once an injured sailor made it to a Confederate naval hospital he stood a excellent chance of living. From October, 1863, to October, 1864, naval hospitals discharged 1410 out of 1990 admitted and recorded only 69 deaths. In the care of a naval surgeon, an injured sailor could expect the best possible treatment, including fresh meat and vegetables, and even some "extras."

For instance, Mallory made plans to erect a distillery in South Carolina, to distill whiskey for the Confederate Navy. The whiskey was used as a medicine for sailors on ships to reduce the effects of damp weather. When these plans were opposed by the state governor, he turned to George Davis, Attorney General, for a ruling. The Attorney General

ruled that there was "no foundation for any authority in State thus to obstruct the action of the Government. The states by their own voluntary consent have made the Constitution of the Confederate states their supreme law, before which all other laws must yield."⁴⁸ With this ruling South Carolina eventually relented, and Mallory was able to build the distillery.

Incidentally, the only communications between Welles and Mallory took place in October 1864 and concerned the exchange of naval prisoners. For over fifteen months, Union and Confederate naval officers and men who had been captured remained in prisoner-of-war compounds. There were relatively few men involved, but the failure to exchange them caused displeasure in the North and South.

For more than a year, Welles had, at various times, made inquiries concerning naval prisoner status to the Secretary of War and had received only evasive answers. Welles had received information that indicated the conditions of confinement were poor and were potentially detrimental to the health of the Union sailors. Welles directed Gustavus Fox to make some unofficial inquiries to the Confederate Navy Department concerning the possibility of making an exchange.

In correspondence from Mallory, Mallory told Welles that he had not received any letters requesting or inquiring into a prisoner exchange. Mallory proposed to exchange all naval prisoners held by both sides. The exchange was agreed upon by both sides and finally took place on the James River in November 1864.

During the negotiations, Welles avoided referring to Mallory's title as Secretary of the Navy in any correspondence, and addressed him as

the "Hon Mr. Mallory."⁴⁹ An interesting note was that the Union War Department got upset that the Navy had arranged its own prisoner exchange without consulting them. Welles' response was, ". . . while general cartel was neglected, the army were making exchanges here, and by Butler on the James, Sherman at Atlanta, Canby at New Orleans, and Foster at Hilton Head. I thought it proper and felt it my duty to see that naval men were not entirely neglected."⁵⁰

In summary, Welles and Mallory proved that they could handle the political difficulties that came with the job. Within the cabinet, each man established himself as an individual not to be trifled with. They both were ready to provide assistance when they could and were not afraid to express their opinions. While their relations with Congress got tough at times, they were able to work with Congress to get a majority of their bills passed.

Welles and Mallory did not command at Mobile Bay or elsewhere, any more than the Secretary of War commanded at Gettysburg. Yet, it was not the business of these men to command a fleet of ships on the sea; it was their business to choose commanders. In this Welles and Mallory showed an ability which their country's War Department was lacking; for in the language of sports, they were quite adept at "picking a winner." "We have officers of capacity, depend upon it," said Welles, "and they should be hunted out and brought forward. The Secretary [Stanton] should dig up these jewels."⁵¹

Both Welles and Mallory worked hard to improve the quality of their personnel, while at the same time attempted to minimize the influences from outside sources. Through their dedication to their high

standards in their job, both men were able to contribute more to their country's cause.

Endnotes

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³Niven, "Gideon Welles," American Secretaries of the Navy, 1:328.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Durkin, 136-141.

⁶Welles, 1:88-89.

⁷The Congressional Globe, Thirty-Seventh Congress, Third Session, ed. John C. Rives (Washington, DC: Office of John C. Rives, 1858), 19.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Fowler, 48-49.

¹⁰Welles, 2:162.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid., 2:119.

¹³Ibid., 1:369.

¹⁴Ibid., 1:157.

¹⁵Ibid., 1:157-158.

¹⁶Ibid., 36.

¹⁷Charles Paullin, "David Dixon Porter," Dictionary of American Biography, ed. Dumas Malone (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1935), 15:88.

¹⁸Welles, 37.

¹⁹Ibid., 1:160.

²⁰Niven, Gideon Welles Lincoln's Secretary of the Navy, 434.

²¹U.S. Department of Navy, Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in The War of the Rebellion, Series I, 14:268.

²²Ibid., 14:61-62.

²³Welles, 1:307.

²⁴Ibid., 1:311.

²⁵U.S. Department of Navy, Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in The War of the Rebellion, Series I, 14:230.

²⁶Welles, 1:345.

²⁷Fowler, 49.

²⁸Ibid., 49-50.

²⁹Welles, 2:232-233.

³⁰Durkin, 148.

³¹William N. Still, JR., "The Confederate States Navy at Mobile, 1861 to August, 1864," Alabama Historical Quarterly (Fall-Winter 1968, Vol. 30), 127-130.

³²Mallory, 19.

³³U.S. Navy Department, Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in The War of the Rebellion, Series II (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1921), 2:242.

³⁴U.S. Navy Department, Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in The War of the Rebellion, Series I (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1903), 16:502.

³⁵U.S. Navy Department, Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in The War of the Rebellion, Series I (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1897), 6:777.

³⁶Ibid., 6:780.

³⁷U.S. Navy Department, Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in The War of the Rebellion, Series I (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1898), 7:57.

³⁸Ibid., 7:43.

³⁹U.S. Navy Department, Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in The War of the Rebellion, Series II, 2:267.

⁴⁰Durkin, 313.

⁴¹U.S. Navy Department, Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in The War of the Rebellion, Series II, 1:530.

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³Joint Select Committee, 106.

⁴⁴Durkin, 175.

⁴⁵Joint Select Committee, 146-147.

⁴⁶U.S. Navy Department, Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in The War of the Rebellion, Series I, 14:401.

⁴⁷Records of 1863 Session of Congress of the Confederate States of America, (Richmond: Government printing office 1862), 133.

⁴⁸U.S. War Department, The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, Series IV, 3:879.

⁴⁹Welles, 2:171.

⁵⁰Ibid., 2:170.

⁵¹Ibid., 1:125.

CHAPTER 5

NAVAL WARFARE

Welles and Mallory came to office by different routes, but each had to use his background in setting the stage for his policies and tactics during the Civil War. While both were conservative in their basic ideas, they utilized different methods to modernize their navies and develop their strategic war plans. Their actions in preparing their navy for war involved the acquisition of ships, by either purchasing, leasing or building ships specifically capable of being used in support of their war plans. In addition, they had to concentrate on developing their respective navy's warfare principles and modifying these operations as necessary to counter their opponent's war plans.

Both men were visionaries when it came to naval warfare, Welles in his plans to enforce the blockade and Mallory with his support of ironclads. Each man had to establish a fleet that was capable of carrying out his respective plans. Their war plans can be divided into four areas of operations: blockade/counter-blockade, commerce raiders/counter-actions, coastal, and river operations.

Their strategies were simple; Welles had to enforce the blockade and stop the Confederate commerce raiders, while Mallory needed a fleet strong enough to defeat the blockade. Throughout the war, both Welles and Mallory understood the importance of having a strong fleet that could support the land component during the war. Both had a desire to influence

England and France to support their respective causes, thus many of their plans were drawn up with this in mind.

Accordingly, when Welles and Mallory became Secretary of the Navy of their respective countries, they were faced with a pressing need for the most important asset: ships. Welles was in the better position of the two, because he had an established fleet, however small, and a strong national industrial base to start with. Mallory, on the other hand, had to establish a navy from minimum assets and resources. Welles and Mallory had to deal with several challenges before they could concentrate on their warfare strategy. First, they had to acquire ships from sources other than new construction. Second, they needed in place plans and contracts for the ships they needed for the war, specifically ironclads. Third, shipyards had to be established that were capable of building and repairing armored ships. Lastly, they had to utilize advances in technology to develop new weapons for the war effort.

Therefore, when faced with a deficiency in ships needed for the war effort, Welles was forced to find ways to supply ships for the blockade. Without legislative authority or appropriations, Welles authorized the purchase of vessels capable of navigating the shallow waters of the Southern states for the blockade. Welles' initial policy had naval officers chartering and purchasing privately owned vessels. One of his first actions was to direct the Commandants of New York, Philadelphia, and Boston Navy Yards to charter or purchase immediately twenty steamers capable of mounting naval cannons. These vessels were used to convoy troops and supplies to the national capital and keep the sea route via the Virginia Capes and the Potomac River.¹

However, the naval officers had little experience in judging vessels outside the sphere of warship construction; thus they bought almost anything that would float and was guns-mount capable. This practice brought a number of overpriced and unfit ships into the U.S. Navy. Because of the restrictions of funding, construction designs, type of tactics to be utilized and supply requirements, the U.S. Navy historically built only a few types of vessels, while the different variations in merchant vessels seemed almost limitless. Also, shipowners saw government demand as an opportunity to rid themselves of excess ships, of which many were in poor condition and uninsurable.

It didn't take long for Welles' acquaintances in New York and New England to start telling him stories of how the officers and Department were being cheated. After looking at the evidence, Welles was forced to conclude that his officers were falling victim to a "palpable and gross" fraud.² He realized that the Department was unable to undertake the task of buying ships as the duties of the Department were then exceedingly heavy, and personnel purchasing and leasing the ships were inexperienced in matters of business. The idea of having a board of officers to do the buying was rejected by Welles because the board members would have lacked the necessary training and experience in conducting such business transactions. Welles was against utilizing competing agents in the same city, because their competition would only drive up the prices for the ships.

Welles believed that the best procedure was to give the responsibility in each major city to an experienced and trustworthy merchant, who would devote all of his time to the work and not be allowed

to charge the government for his service. The agents could be paid a regular commission, as fixed by the Chamber of Commerce in their state, by the seller. As his initial representatives, Welles chose George D. Morgan, his brother-in-law and merchant, and William Aspinwall, merchant and shipowner, to purchase the needed ships from New York. In Boston, Welles hired John Forbes, a local businessman and shipbuilder. Welles' only direction to them was to get the best deal possible.³

Utilization of this method caused a lot of controversy for Welles and Lincoln's administration, because Welles was accused of nepotism in his hiring of Morgan. Additionally, Morgan received a 2.5 percent commission while Forbes refused to accept one. This resulted in Morgan receiving over \$70,000 in commissions.⁴ Welles stuck to this procedure, even when pressure from Congress, led by his nemesis Senator Hale, increased for a congressional investigation into the practice of purchasing ships through agents.⁵

Senator Hale, after declaring his confidence in the Secretary of the Navy, asserted in his Congressional address that Welles had committed "a gigantic, an overwhelming mistake"⁶ in the disbursement of public funds. Hale objected to the commission paid to Morgan by the sellers, saying,

I have it, and I am authorized to state it on the floor of the Senate, on the authority of an honorable member of the House of Representatives, that the price paid for a commission of this sort in the city [New York] is one per cent, instead of two and a half, and if a broker or agent purchasing a ship for him--thus I have it from the gentleman, a member of the House from the city of New York--charged him a commission of one and a quarter per cent, that that charge would be once rectified by the Chamber of Commerce, and they would allow no such charge. That, sir, is for the purchase of a single ship. I have the same opinion from a ship broker in the city of New York, which I have received this morning in a private letter, that one per cent is the law, and the well-established law.⁷

In his supplementary report to Congress, Welles wrote:

With all these considerations fully before me, I chose the man for my work. He happened to be the brother-in-law of one who in the private relations of life is nearest to me. I knew that envy and cavil would seize upon this accidental fact and brandish it against me, and that even fair and honest criticism might for the moment consider it inauspicious and perplexing, and so regret it. But was I therefore to flinch from my deliberate convictions of official duty? Was I therefore to withhold from the government in its emergency one single guarantee, public or personal, which I could possibly give of the perfect fidelity of my agent in this most difficult business? Not so. Pained as I was to foresee that I might for a time, and until the whole truth should be known, be doubted, be criticized, or even unjustly attacked on this account, I yet...found the strength and firmness to trample all such merely selfish considerations under my feet. With thousands of good men before me from whom to select, I chose the best man whom I personally knew to do my work; and in so choosing I did my duty, and no more nor less than my duty.⁸

On February 14, 1862, Senator Hale's efforts to censure the Navy Department failed on the floor of the Senate, when his resolution calling for the censure of Welles was tabled and was never brought before the Senate again.⁹ Hale then shifted his attention to the House, where he got a resolution to censure Welles introduced into the House. The measure condemned Welles for hiring Morgan without the proper authority and for not requiring Morgan to give him a guarantee of faithful performance of his duties in the purchasing the ships. On April 30, 1862, the measure was defeated by a vote of seventy-two to forty-five.¹⁰

Welles considered purchasing ships as only a temporary solution to the shortage of ships; thus the entire controversy over using private merchants lasted only until mid-1862. By then the shipbuilding capability of navy and private yards was up to wartime levels, and by then a sufficient number of officers had gained the needed experience to negotiate contracts with ship owners. By avoiding the practice of purchasing ships off the open markets, the Union Navy was able to build

specific ships for the navy's needs. Yet the Navy Department still ended up buying 497 ships during the war, including 184 from the Treasury and War Departments.¹¹

Whereas Welles considered the practice of purchasing privately owned ships as only a temporary solution, Mallory, on the other hand, saw it as a necessity of survival and it would be an important method of acquisition for him during the entire war. During the months prior to Mallory's assuming office, Confederate and state authorities seized all property belonging to the United States Government in the seceded states. When Mallory took the oath of office, he took charge of ten ships mounting fifteen guns.¹² The USS Fulton, an aged steamer laid up at Pensacola, was the only operational Union naval vessel that fell into Southern hands. In addition to the Fulton, the Confederates had seized four small revenue cutters, three slavers, and two privately owned steamers.¹³ On April 21, 1861, the Confederates seized the Norfolk Naval yard, resulting in an addition of seven ships¹⁴ and over 1,100 guns.¹⁵ Included was the sunken hull of the USS Merrimack. The Merrimack had been sunk when Federal troops abandoned the Norfolk Navy Yard. The Merrimack would later be raised and converted into the ironclad Virginia.

Since the South had so little maritime tradition, Mallory had to convince most Southern leaders, including Jefferson Davis, that the south even needed a navy.¹⁶ Central to Mallory's plans was maintaining contact with the outside world in the face of the Northern blockade. For the Confederacy to survive, the blockade had to be broken. Mallory envisioned using two tactics against the North: first, create a reason for the enemy's ships to be ordered away from the coast and, secondly, attack the

blockaders themselves with the Confederate Navy. To draw the Union ships away, Mallory believed that commerce raiders would put considerable pressure on the Union Government to pull ships off of the blockade and send them in search of the raiders. On the other hand, the South might, with the help of dedicated sailors, imagination and surprise, be able to achieve local superiority if they could acquire ships and guns. If Union ships were destroyed or driven away for a period of time, Mallory thought that the South would reap considerable propaganda value and be able to move its own vessels in and out of port. Mallory knew what had to be done, but the South lacked the ships to carry out his plans.

Because the South lacked time and facilities, Mallory had to depend on other methods to get ships. As early as March, 1861, Mallory sent agents to the North, and in May, 1861, agents were sent to Canada to arrange for the purchase and construction of ships. While the agents were busy in Europe, Mallory put other representatives of the Navy Department to work obtaining vessels in the South. Twenty-two of the thirty vessels purchased in the South were bought by the end of 1861.¹⁷ Mallory's agents chartered two vessels at New Orleans, of which one was commissioned the Sumter, a commerce raider, under Captain Raphael Semmes' command. The last means used by the Confederate Navy in increasing the number of ships was capture. Eighteen vessels, with forty-seven guns, were captured from the Union.¹⁸

Like Welles, Mallory turned to purchasing and leasing ships to initially solve his shortage of ships. But unlike Welles, Mallory lacked major naval and private shipyards that could build his ships. Necessity dictated that Mallory and the Confederacy turn to Europe for rams,

ironclads, and steam cruisers, as well as the guns and ammunition for them.

Mallory decided in early April 1861 to send agents to England. On May 8, 1861, Mallory directed James Dunwody Bulloch to go abroad at once. Bulloch was quite surprised at the orders and his mission, because after earlier conversations with Judah Benjamin, he had expected to be assigned the District Commander of New Orleans and assume responsibility for the city's defense. Even though the assignment was not what Bulloch expected, he readily agreed to become the Confederacy's representative in Europe. As to what Mallory proposed, Bulloch saw the task of creating a navy in foreign shipyards for an unrecognized country without credit to build ships, nor open ports to sustain them, as a near impossible task. Yet Bulloch immediately departed for England via Canada, because the Canadian route was quicker than waiting for an opportunity to run the blockade.

Bulloch wrote that Mallory instructed him:

To be prudent and heedful, so not to involve the Diplomatic agents of the Confederate States in Embarrassing complaints for alleged violation of neutral law or obligation, and he [Mallory] directed me to acquaint myself as soon as possible after my arrival in England, with the nature and scope of the Foreign Enlistment Act and the Queen's Proclamation of Neutrality, if one should be issued. Reverting to the special objects of my mission, he impressed upon me the wish of the Government to get cruising ships of suitable type afloat with the quickest possible despatch, and urge me to buy and forward naval supplies of all kinds without delay.¹⁹

Initially the ships that Mallory wanted were those capable of doing great damage to the North's commerce in the shortest possible time. As to the design of the commerce raiders, Mallory left that up to Bulloch. Mallory's only requirement was that they had to have the ability to remain underway for extended periods of time and suggested a "combination of steam and sail."²⁰ This would allow the ship to strike without warning

and then slip away to reappear at other unexpected and unprotected ports. The second part of Mallory's plan was to construct ironclad rams, armed with rifled guns. It was with these ships that Mallory expected to challenge the Union Navy for control of the southern coast. Mallory told Representative Charles M. Conrad, Chairman of the Confederate House Naval Committee, that ironclads would create fear along the Northern coast, break the blockade, and with a fair chance of success, deter the Federal fleet.

In addition to Mallory directing Bulloch to acquire ships, Bulloch was directed to buy and forward as much naval material as he could find; this included ammunition and weapons. Some of the other material requested were accouterments for marines, clothing, blankets, iron for ship building, tools, skilled mechanics, small marine engines for torpedo boats, powerful marine engines for ironclad gunboats and ordnance stores.²¹

Mallory and the Confederacy had to find ways to get these ships out of England, in order to avoid the suspicion of England's giving aid to the Confederates. So any ship built in England for the Confederacy had to be done so in such a way that its real use would be disguised. Any equipment or design that had the semblance of war about it was omitted. English shipbuilders had to buy guns from one manufacturer, shot and shells from a second, and small arms and ammunition from at least two other parties. The large quantity of supplies needed for an extended voyage had to be purchased from more than one merchant.²²

Throughout this time Welles and Seward sent agents to Europe to monitor the activities of the Confederate agents. They continuously

complained to the British Government that its practice toward the Confederate agents was lax and that some of the British officers of the government wilfully ignored the orders of their superiors regarding trade with the Confederacy. In 1863 England changed its policy so that it made building Confederate ships in England almost impossible.

To get around the tougher English policies, Bulloch and Mallory conceived a plan that would get some English supplies to the Southern armies. They had material sent on small, unarmed neutral steamers to the Caribbean Islands and then transferred the material, and sometimes the ships, to a Confederate representative, who then made the dangerous runs in and out of the blockaded ports. This allowed Confederate agents a way to get around the British stand of preventing war materials going to the South and provided some vessels for the Confederates, all the while technically obeying the laws of England.

In autumn of 1862, Mallory sent a second agent to Europe, Matthew Maury. Maury was selected because of his work as an oceanographer and his expertise on wind and tides, which had won international acclaim. By sending such a well-respected man, Mallory attempted to raise the prestige of Southern agents abroad. Mallory continued to communicate with Bulloch, stressing the importance of completing ships as early as practical. By early June 1863, Mallory wrote Bulloch, "We have long since abandoned all belief in English intervention, and have learned to regard the settled policy of the ministry as hostile to us."²³

With the loss of English yards to build vessels, Mallory instructed Bulloch and Maury to negotiate with French authorities sympathetic to the Confederate cause to have several ironclads built in

French yards. Requirements were that the ships had to be able to traverse the Atlantic, a 5000 mile trip, carry 11-inch and/or 15 inch guns, and have the draft, speed and engine power to operate on the Mississippi.²⁴ On August 25, 1864, Bulloch notified Mallory that work on the two vessels contracted for and that were nearing completion had been stopped, because Union agents were able to pressure the French Government into denying the transfer of the vessels to the Confederates.

Throughout the war, Mallory and his agents continued their efforts to provide ships and supplies for the Confederacy. Bulloch's and Maury's efforts, under Mallory's direction, resulted in the commission of six ships from England and one from Denmark. They included two of the most successful and famous Confederate raiders of the war: CSS Alabama and CSS Florida.

Equally important was the ability to build ships, and not just the traditional sailing vessel. Both Welles and Mallory put great of effort into building ships at home. Yet, at the start of war it was obvious that the North held an extreme advantage in materials, facilities and manpower.

Welles had available to him vast supplies and resources. The United States possessed all of the resources, machine-shops, and skilled labor necessary to quickly prepare vessels suitable for operating on the Southern coast. There were four major naval shipyards and large supplies of materials at each. At the three principal Northern sea-ports there were private shipbuilders quite capable of undertaking almost any description of Government work. There were many machine-shops, cannon-foundries and powder mills in the North to go with an ample supply of coal and iron.

Welles, in his yearly reports to Congress, pushed for the establishment of a yard and depot on the Mississippi or Ohio Rivers to support the naval operations in the west and the establishment a special one on the Eastern or Gulf coast for the construction and repair of modern naval vessels. Welles stressed that the need for these two yards was brought about by the change in naval technology and naval warfare since the introduction of steam propulsion for ships-of-war.²⁵ Congress never approved the establishment of a yard on the Western Rivers, but it did appropriate money to upgrade the Philadelphia Naval Yard facilities to handle overhauls for steam and armored ships.

At the same time, Mallory had very little available to help him in building his ships. There was only one public shipyard in the South, and that yard had been damaged considerably when Union troops evacuated Norfolk. Not a single private yard was ready to undertake building ships of war. There was only one foundry located in the South, the Tredegar Works located in Richmond, Virginia. The South had a limited supply of iron and coal, and a majority of that was of poor quality. There was a shortage of machinery needed for manufacturing angle iron or bending frames. The South had a large supply of timber available throughout the southeast, although once harvested it would be green, the least preferred wood for shipbuilding. The other problem was the lack of skilled woodworkers who could fell and fashion trees into beams.

The other natural resource that Mallory and the Confederacy lacked was skilled craftsmen. On August 16, 1862, Mallory reported to Davis:

The want of expert mechanics and of iron and the absence of tools and workshops for such work as heavy ironclad ships require, greatly curtail the ability of the Confederacy in the construction of this class of vessels.²⁶

The shortage of skilled craftsmen in the South caused serious delays in shipbuilding production schedule. The scarcity was caused by the draft of Southern craftsmen into the army and the exodus of Northerners and foreigners, who before the war had constituted an important part of the skilled labor force in the South.

With only one naval shipyard, Norfolk, in the South, Mallory set about establishing a depot in New Orleans in late 1861. He started planning to deposit naval stores and established a place for collecting and training seamen. Mallory directed his representatives in New Orleans to establish facilities to manufacture ship engines, boilers, and iron plates for armored ships.

In March, 1862, Mallory granted authority for the establishment of an ordnance laboratory in New Orleans. The intention was for it to cast heavy cannon, construct gun-carriages, and manufacture projectiles and ordnance equipment of all kinds. He did this because the facilities in Richmond and Norfolk could not support the ordnance requirements needed for the naval defenses of the Mississippi.²⁷

Both Welles and Mallory recognized that the Civil War was going to be waged in an era of transition for both naval architecture and fighting methods. When the war began, more than half of the warships were sailing vessels, but by the time the war ended, over four-fifths of the warships in use were steamers.²⁸ In addition to changing the method of propulsion, Mallory and Welles believed that there was a need for armored ships.

When the Civil War started, the ironclad had been in the development phase for many years within naval circles around the world. From 1856 to 1861, British and French naval architects' attention was

directed toward designing and building cruising ships with ironclad broad-sides. France was the first country to construct a war vessel with iron-plated sides, the Gloire.

When the war started, Welles was not a strong believer in building armored ships and had set out to build wooden steamers similar to the USS Cumberland. Welles had even told Abram Hewitt, a New Jersey iron manufacturer, in a letter that his department had no plans to construct iron vessels.²⁹ Welles changed his mind after hearing reports that the Confederates, under Mallory's direction, had raised the Merrimack and had started to convert her as an ironclad and had started construction on the iron ram, Manassas, in New Orleans.

On 4 July 1861, in a report to a special session of Congress, Welles declared the importance of ironclad steamers and recommended the creation of a naval board to investigate designs and assigning contracts for the building of ironclad vessels, even though Mallory had authorized the conversion of the Merrimack without waiting for the approval of the Confederate Congress. Congress finally approved the establishment of the board and appropriated 1.5 million dollars³⁰ for the ships in early August, and six more weeks elapsed before the board, composed of three naval officers, made its report in mid-September.

On August 8, 1861, Welles appointed Commodore Joseph Smith, Chief of the Bureau of Yards and Docks, Commodore Hiram Paulding and Captain Charles H. Davis. All of the board members were distinguished officers and well respected within the Navy and approached their task with dedication, but the board members lacked technical knowledge about armored ships and their construction. They eventually recommended assigning

contracts for three of the seventeen submitted designs. It still took three weeks before Welles authorized construction of the ironclads.³¹

Welles played a key role in the board's selection of John Ericcson's design. While on a visit to Hartford, Connecticut, Welles examined a model designed by Ericcson for a dual-turret vessel or floating battery that impressed him so favorably that he directed Ericcson to resubmit his plan to the board. Ericcson's plan was initially rejected by the board. However, when Ericcson presented his design to the board with Welles in attendance, the board approved it, and Welles immediately approved the contract.

The Monitor presented a simple appearance: its small size, 172 feet long and 41 ½ feet wide, its flat hull presenting only a few inches above the water line, with a revolving gun turret mounted in the center of the vessel. In the turret were mounted two eleven-inch Dahlgren guns. The thickest armor, eleven inches, on the ship was around the turret, thus providing increased protection to its men. During the battle with the Merrimack/Virginia its armoring proved impregnable against ten-inch shot at close range. The Monitor had a speed of eight knots and proved extremely maneuverable. Ericcson designed the Monitor to have a draft of 10 ½ feet, thus making the ship extremely capable in the shallow waters of the South.³²

After the success of the Monitor, Welles and the board set into motion the standards that the Navy Department used throughout the war in determining acceptable designs for armored ships. There would be some failures, but most of the ships built would be extremely beneficial in the war effort. As the war was approaching its end, Welles viewed iron ships

as the future. On February 11, 1865, Chief Engineer Alban Stimers, senior engineer in charge of constructing ironclads in New York City, reported to the Joint Congressional Committee on the Conduct of the War that Welles told him:

I wish you to keep in your mind always that these vessels may not be used in this war, but may be required to protect our harbors against the iron-clad vessels of foreign nations. Always keep in view, during their construction, that this is the most important point to consider. Those things which occur in battle between heavy ships and iron vessels are the things for which you must provide.³³

During the war the Navy built or contracted for 298 vessels, of which sixty were ironclads.³⁴ In the years following the Civil War, Welles continued to encourage the research and development of armored ships.

On the contrary, Mallory early on saw that armored ships were the future, and he took measures to put these views into motion as soon as he became the Confederate Naval Secretary. On 8 May, 1861, Mallory expressed his views on iron-clad vessels to the Joint Committee on Naval Affairs of the Confederate Congress. He argued that their efficiency during a war would make them an economically sound investment. Mallory believed that one ironclad vessel could successfully engage a fleet of wooden vessels, which is what most of the Union Navy was. He expressed the view that the South could not hope to build wooden fleets equal to those which the Union had. Mallory urged the committee to prompt action with the declaration, "Not a moment should be lost."³⁵

Early in 1861, Mallory instituted a series of discussions and experiments to determine how floating batteries and rams could be best constructed and protected by iron plates. Many people submitted plans; some even contended that cotton bales might be effectively used as a

shield against shot. The Confederate deficiency in iron and rolling mills for making iron plates caused cotton to actually be used as a substitute for iron armor.³⁶

Before the war, only 7 steam war-vessels had been built in the Southern states, and only two of the engines had been constructed in the South.³⁷ Mallory sent representatives throughout the Confederacy in search of rolling mills and any other means that could be used to produce iron-plates.

Using his own authority, Mallory had the Union frigate Merrimack, which had been scuttled after the Union abandonment of Norfolk, raised and started to make plans for her conversion to an ironclad. On July 18, 1861, Mallory submitted the following report:

The frigate Merrimack has been raised and docked at an expense of \$6,000, and the necessary repairs to hull and machinery to place her in her former condition, is [sic] estimated by experts at \$450,000. The vessel would then be in the river, and by the blockade of the enemy's fleet and batteries, rendered completely useless. It has therefore been determined to shield her completely with three inch iron placed at such angles as to render her ball-proof, to complete her at the earliest moment, to arm her with the heaviest ordnance; and to send her at once against the enemy's fleet. It is believed that thus prepared, she will be able to contend successfully against the heaviest of the enemy's ships, and to drive them from Hampton Roads and the ports of Virginia. The cost of this work is estimated by the constructor and engineer in charge at \$172,523, and as time is of the first consequence in this enterprise, I have not hesitated to commence the work, and to ask Congress for the necessary appropriation.³⁸

The Confederate mechanics didn't lack the skill and foresight like their Northern counterparts did. Early after the firing on Fort Sumter, a group of distinguished merchants set about building a "ram" at New Orleans. The ram, Manassas, caused quite a concern among the northern ships' captains blockading the mouth of the Mississippi River.

Mallory's efforts continued to build his vision of an ironclad that would sweep the Union forces from the seas. Mallory's plans received their worst setback during a span of five months. From April 24 to August 5, 1862, the Confederate Navy lost the ironclads Manassas, Mississippi, Louisiana, Merrimack/Virginia, Tennessee, and Arkansas, through battle or destruction to prevent their capture.³⁹ Even so, Mallory continued in his efforts to build ironclads.

However, ironclads were not the only ships being built in the Confederacy. Soon after the beginning of the war, Secretary Mallory entered into numerous contracts for the construction of gunboats, floating batteries, and vessels-of-war. Many of these vessels were constructed and delivered and performed valuable service in the Confederate Navy, but they were unable to break the blockade by force because they lacked guns, armor and speed. The number needed fell far short of the intended goal and were without needed equipment. J. Thomas Scarf, Confederate Naval historian, wrote:

The building of these gunboats was hindered by a variety of causes, and in many instances their completion was prevented by the enemy capturing the localities where the boats were being built. Such failures could not have been prevented by the Navy Department, and the wonder is not that greater success did not attend Secretary Mallory's efforts, but that so much was done with such limited means, and in spite of the active and unremitting advances of a powerful enemy.⁴⁰

From June 28 to December 1, 1862, Mallory entered into thirty-two contracts for the construction of ironclads, forty gunboats, floating batteries, and steam ships of war. Most of the contracts were with private parties in various cities from Norfolk to New Orleans to Memphis. This was in addition to vessels that were being built under the supervision of Mallory's own officers. The process of building was

hampered by a number of causes, and in many instances the main reason for the ships not being built was the capture of the yards where construction was taking place.⁴¹

Mallory and Welles devoted considerable time and effort to establishing an ironclad program in their navies. Welles' dedication and inspiration made the Union's naval contribution important to the war effort, because without it, the Confederates would have been able to receive much needed war supplies from Europe, and this would have resulted in a longer war or perhaps even a Southern victory. In a like manner, Mallory's efforts to create a modern navy with minimum resources forced the Union Navy to dedicate more assets to the war effort and gave the Southern Navy a chance, even though small, to win the war.

Furthermore, some of the most effective naval weapon systems were not the ships, but new technology. Foremost of this new technology was the new invention called the torpedo (mine). The system of using torpedoes, adopted mainly by the Confederates, was probably more effective than any other means of naval defense. The destructiveness of these weapons had been known since the Revolutionary War, but no successful delivery modes for them had been developed prior to the Civil War.

Throughout the war, Welles was not a strong advocate of this new mine technology, nor were of his senior officers. The Union Navy did use some of the captured Confederate torpedoes, but their use was more infrequent than common. Some torpedo experimentation took place in the private sector, but this was limited as well, especially since Welles did not encourage many appropriations for this technology.

At the end of 1861, Welles established a Naval Examining board to appraise inventions submitted to the department. He stressed that recommendations to adopt an invention should state "the advantages and the economy that will result from its use and the total expenditure that it will occasion." For, as the Welles put it, "the money appropriated by Congress for the navy cannot be applied to any experimental purpose but only for objects of undoubted utility."⁴² The board functioned from January 2 to July 10, 1862, and accomplished very little.

On 11 February 1863, Welles approved the establishment of a Permanent Commission to advise him and the Department on questions of science and art. The commission would review designs for new inventions and provide recommendations. Although most of their recommended designs were not completed by the end of the Civil War, it established the procedures that made the U.S. Navy capable of waging a more scientific war in the future.

From August to September 1863, a series of correspondence between Rear Admiral Dahlgren and Welles took place, in which Dahlgren encouraged the development of submersible vessels.⁴³ After conferring with Admiral Paulding, Welles decided that such a vessel would not be feasible and would not support its development.⁴⁴

The leaders in developing and using new naval technology during the war were Mallory and the Confederate Navy. The success of their efforts can best be described in a statement by one of the most distinguished of officers of the Union Navy, Admiral David Porter.

The difficulty of capturing Charleston, Savannah, Wilmington, and Mobile was in a measure owing to the fact that the approaches to these places were filled with various kinds of torpedoes, laid in groups and fired by electricity. The introduction of this means of defense on the

side of the Confederates was for a time a severe check to our naval forces, for the commanders of squadrons felt it their duty to be careful when dealing with an element of warfare of which they knew so little, and the character and disposition of which it was so difficult to discover.⁴⁵

In an attempt to counter the Northern blockade, Mallory encouraged the private sector to develop a group of semi-submersibles known as "Davids," because they were small craft that were intended to battle the Union's "Goliath fleet."⁴⁶ Although not true submersibles, since their smokestacks and air intakes were above water, they were the first vessels to use submergence with tactical success during a war.

Also, since the Confederates started with nothing, they had to create something that might even the odds. The key to the Confederates developing new technology was that they experimented with a variety of weapons both through official channels of the Navy Department and those of private citizens. Private enterprise brought out the first submarine, Pioneer, and the ram, Manassas.⁴⁷ The Confederate Government made it profitable for private ships to be built and used against the Union warships by paying a percentage of the ships' value to the owner of the privateers. This percentage would eventually go up to 50 percent, from 20 percent, of the value of the vessel destroyed and the estimated worth of the crew she carried.⁴⁸ The Pioneer never went into battle, because during her shake down cruise, just before the Federals took the city, it sank in the Bayou St. John, killing its three man crew.⁴⁹

Another Confederate development was the Hunley, a true submersible. Although it used a hand-cranked propeller system and was slower than the "Davids," it could submerge completely. Fitted with a spar torpedo, a 6-m (20-ft) pole tipped with an explosive charge, the

Hunley went down on the night of February 17, 1864, sinking a Union corvette, the U.S.S. Housatonic, 5 ½ miles off of Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor, but destroyed itself in the process. When the Hunley made her maiden and last voyage, her crew was composed of civilian, army and navy members.

As a whole, the new technologies did not play a major role during the war, yet the research and development that took place laid the groundwork for future naval warfare. Mallory's encouragement of new technologies was an attempt to find a "super weapon" that would have given the Confederate Navy an edge or at least level out the playing field with the Union Navy. While in the North Welles did not discourage the efforts toward new inventions, he was not overly supportive of them, because he did not believe the new technology could replace the warship.

Accordingly, once plans were established to build and purchase ships, Welles and Mallory turned their attention to operational warfare. Both navies engaged in three areas of operational warfare that involved interaction between the two hostile fleets: (1) blockade, (2) co-operating with Army operations on the coast and on the rivers, and (3) commerce raiders.

The blockade became one of the first services that the Union Navy was called on to perform during the war. The actual blockading problem was not a matter of the number of miles of coastline but, rather, the limited number of points where cargos could land and make contact with interior facilities for further transport to the Confederate armies. With such an extensive coast to guard, much of it with a double shore or broken by numerous inlets and estuaries, the patrolling squadrons were confronted

with the daring and persistent efforts of the blockade runners, and thus had to maintain a vigilance day and night.

The Proclamation of Blockade was issued by President Lincoln on April 19, 1861. The President declared a blockade of the Southern coast; it included the following states: South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Florida, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas. In the proclamation the President issued the following warning:

If therefore with a view to violate such blockade, a vessel shall approach or shall attempt to leave either of the said ports, she will be duly warned by the commander of one of the blockading vessels, who will endorse on her register the fact and date of such warning and if the same vessel shall again attempt to enter or leave the blockaded port, she will be captured and sent to the nearest convenient port for such proceeding against her and her cargo as prize, as may be deemed advisable.

And I hereby proclaim and declare that if any person under the pretended authority of the said States, or under any other pretense, shall molest a vessel of the United States, or the persons or cargo on board of her, such person will be held amenable to the laws of the United States for the prevention and punishment of piracy.⁵⁰

On April 27, 1861, the blockade was extended to include the coasts of North Carolina and Virginia.⁵¹

Welles was not in total agreement with President Lincoln over declaring a blockade. Instead, Welles believed that the Rebels should be treated as an internal problem; thus, Lincoln should have "closed the ports" instead of declaring a blockade. Welles contended that a blockade was in some degree a recognition of belligerency; Welles writes of the blockade:

From the beginning there was a persistent determination to treat the Rebels as alien belligerent,--as a hostile and distinct people,--to blockade, instead of closing, their ports. The men "duly accredited by the Confederate States of America" held back-door intercourse with the Secretary of State, and lived and moved in ostentatious style in Washington for some weeks. Thus commencing, other governments had reason to claim that we had initiated them into the belief that the

Federal Government and its opponents were two nations; and the Union people of the South were, by this policy of Government and that of the army, driven, compelled against their wishes, to be our antagonists.⁵²

By initiating the policy of blockade, Lincoln conceded belligerent rights to the Confederacy and neutral rights to foreigners. The Union Navy's problem was that the blockade had to be enforced according to international law. Under international law, the blockade of a Confederate port could not be established until a naval force arrived at the entrance of that port. The blockading fleet's job was to prevent vessels from entering and exiting the port. The commander of the Union vessel was required to notify the authorities ashore that a blockade had been established and had to permit foreign vessels already in port fifteen days to depart. Once the fifteen-day grace period elapsed, the port was considered closed, and anyone attempting to depart was subject to capture. When a neutral or foreign vessel appeared at the port, it had to be notified of the blockade and informed that it could be captured and held over for court if it attempted to enter.⁵³

By the middle of July 1861, the blockade had become reasonably complete, and contraband trade was carried on only by use of blockade runners. One method of blockading the ports of the Confederacy, in order to interdict communication as well as to prevent the egress of privateers and blockade runners, was that of sinking vessels laden with stone in channels leading to the ports. The first movement in this direction was on the coast of North Carolina where there were the numerous inlets of Albemarle and Pamlico sounds and other interior waters which afforded facilities for eluding the blockade. It was for this purpose that Welles directed that a number of small vessels be purchased and sent to North

Carolina. Another type of larger vessel was used to obstruct the channels in Charleston and Savannah.⁵⁴

Considerable time thus elapsed before the blockade became actually effective, because the Union lacked sufficient ships to establish the blockade. Mallory and the Confederacy were unable to take any significant advantage because they lacked the needed vessels and manpower to break or evade the blockade. At first, the Confederacy received a significant amount of war material through their ports, but this gradually dropped as the blockade ships of the Union appeared off the coast. Initially vessels warned off from ports closed during the first part of the war simply went up or down the coast to put in at Savannah, Georgia; Bull's Bay, South Carolina; Newbern, North Carolina; or Wilmington, North Carolina.⁵⁵

Confederate blockade runners used a number of British and French ports in the Caribbean as stop-off points, such as New Brunswick, the Bermudas, or Nassau. It was at these points that war material from Europe was transferred to Confederate vessels. The vessels would then attempt to run past the Union ships under the cover of darkness. Blockade running was encouraged by the Confederate Government, but it did not control it, because less control encouraged more runners.

During the early months of 1861 Mallory developed the plan that would guide the Confederate Navy for the duration of the war. In his planning, Mallory had to come up with a method to draw the Union Navy away from the Confederate coastline. During the war of 1812 the U.S. Navy had used a tactic in which they sent a small squadron of ships to attack British commerce. Using this historical example, Mallory's goal to get as many cruisers to sea as possible and at the earliest time after the

beginning of hostilities. Primarily the purpose was to destroy the enemy's commerce, and thus to increase the burden of the war on a large and influential class in the North. The collateral purpose was to compel Welles to send many of the Union's best ships abroad in pursuit of the Confederate cruisers, and to increase Union naval expenditure, which Mallory hoped would lead to a weakening of the blockade. Another effect hoped for was that this Confederate raiding would reduce the Union's ability to conduct attacks on the Southern coast.

One of Mallory's first actions as Secretary of the Navy was to send agents to New Orleans to locate ships that would be usable as raiders. The agents acquired two ships that were capable of being refitted as warships, the steamers Habana and Marques de la Habana. The Habana was renamed the Habana Sumter and fitted out with one eight-inch pivot gun and four thirty-pounders on broadside.⁵⁶ Mallory quickly approved the purchase and immediately assigned Raphael Semmes to command the Habana Sumter and gave him the mission of going to sea and attacking Northern commerce.

Semmes and the Sumter began the war by running the New Orleans blockade on June 30, 1861. From the third to the seventh of July, 1861, the Sumter captured six ships.⁵⁷ Over the next eighteen months Semmes and the Sumter would wage war on the United States merchantmen from the Caribbean to the Mediterranean. Eventually the Sumter was sold at public auction at Gibraltar on December 19, 1862.⁵⁸ The ship had to be sold because its engines were in poor shape, and Semmes experienced difficulty in acquiring coal. Without efficient steam engines and especially coal,

the Sumter would never have outrun the Union cruisers waiting for her outside Gibraltar.

However, the sale of the Sumter did not end Semmes' career with the Confederate Navy. Mallory notified Bulloch that command of the new cruiser, Alabama, was going to Semmes. The Alabama became the most famous of the Confederate cruisers. She started her career by slipping out of Liverpool the evening of July 29, 1862, and proceeded to Terceira Island, in the Azores, to take on supplies, equipment, ordnance, crew and Captain Semmes. Over a period of six weeks, starting in early September, the Alabama captured over \$400,000 dollars in prize vessels.⁵⁹ The Alabama was the only Confederate warship to destroy a Union war ship, Hatteras, on the open ocean. Over a twenty-two month period, the Alabama cruised over 75,000 miles and operated off the Azores, in the South Atlantic, off South Africa, in the China Sea and in the Indian Ocean. Before she was sunk by the USS Kearsarge on June 19, 1864, the Alabama captured and ransomed or destroyed sixty-four prizes.⁶⁰

In March, 1864, Mallory, with the upcoming U.S. presidential election in mind, sent the raiders against shipping leaving New England. It was an attempt to encourage Northerners to consider that peace with the Confederates was necessary and to inflict additional misery on New England merchants, because that region was the home of some of the leading enemies of the South even before the war.

Throughout the war, Mallory frequently commented on the lack of vessels to implement his plans to disrupt Northern commerce. But even without an adequate number of ships, Confederate cruisers in the course of

the war were still responsible for capturing or destroying "49 ships, 18 brigs, 35 barks, 34 schooners, one steamer, one pilot boat; 138 in all."⁶¹

Confederate cruisers were not the only type of commerce raiders that the Confederates used against Northern shipping. On May 6, 1861, the Confederate Congress authorized President Davis to grant letters of marque and reprisal. This was done to encourage private ship owners to fit out their ships and prey on Northern shipping. Over thirty letters of marque were issued by the Confederacy from June 1861 to September 1864.⁶²

Although Mallory did not have much say in who got the letter, he did encourage the practice. He favored this practice of legalized piracy, because he hoped privateers, like his cruisers, would terrorize Northern merchants into applying pressure on Welles to force him to pull ships off of the blockade. In March 1862, with Mallory's support, Congress approved a bill through which the Confederate government waived any claim to what was captured by a privateer.⁶³

The effect that the Confederate cruisers and privateers had on the American merchant fleet was tremendous. Over 300 ships were captured by cruisers and privateers during the war. American merchants started to ship their merchandise on ships other than those that were American flagged. In 1860 over two-thirds of the commerce was carried by American ships, but by 1863, three-fourths was carried by ships flying a flag other than American.⁶⁴ Reflagging was common because the Confederates rarely attacked a ship other than one flying the American flag. This is reflected by an increase in the number of American vessels registered in the United Kingdom and in British North America, as reflected by the following figures:

# of Vessels		
<u>Year</u>	<u>Registered in England</u>	<u>Tonnage</u>
1861	126	71,173
1862	135	64,578
1863	348	252,579
1864	106	92,052 ⁶⁵

Meantime, Welles was besieged by rumors about privateers and cruisers going to sea to ravage the United States' commerce. Every insurance company, ship owner, merchant and Governor with any connection to commerce was contacting Welles and demanding that he take action against these raiders. There were tales of privateers being fitted out in Liverpool, Spain and even in South America. It seemed every merchant captain arriving in the North had just barely escaped a Confederate cruiser or privateer. Lincoln even declared that any person molesting United States' shipping under the letters of marque from the Southern States would be treated as a pirate.

On May 14, 1861, Queen Victoria issued a proclamation which declared that Great Britain regarded the Confederate States as a belligerent power; thus Confederate sailors and privateersmen were not considered pirates by the English. The Queen went on to issue an order, on June 1, 1861, that forbade armed ships of both sides from bringing their prizes into British or colonial ports.⁶⁶ This was a diplomatic victory for Welles and Seward; it reduced the profit aspect of the raiders severely. Privateers needed some place convenient to take prizes, so they could be sold; thus, reducing the number of available ports in which a privateer could make a profit helped the Union's war effort.

In an effort to counter the cruisers and privateers, Welles sent out small squadrons of ships to search for them. Initially Welles sent

only a few, but as the Union Navy bought and built more ships, he sent more out. However, the squadrons were not that effective against the raiders; most of the ships never saw a raider, and when they did, the raiders had a good probability of escaping, because of their superior propulsion.

Some members of the United States Government encouraged the North to use privateers as well. On March 8, 1863, the United States Congress gave Lincoln the authority to issue letters of marque for three years. Secretaries Seward and Chase favored using the letters as a deterrence to the Confederate blockade runners and toward neutrals that supported the Confederates. There was strong sentiment throughout the country and administration in favor of using letters of marque as a method to strike back at the Confederacy. President Lincoln had signed the act into law, but was not sure if he would issue the letters, although his initial thoughts favored it.

Welles was against the act from the beginning. To Welles' thinking the Confederates had no commercial ships to offer as targets for the Union privateers, thus providing little monetary reward to encourage the North's privateering. He believed that issuing letters of marque would encourage trouble, making neutral ships targets. Welles did not envision Union privateers seeking out the Alabama and other cruisers, but thought they would prey on neutrals seeking to run the blockade. By attacking neutrals, Welles believed, the Union raiders would cause undue strains between the United States and neutral European powers. Based on Welles' arguments, Lincoln changed his mind and never issued letters of marque.

Mallory hoped the raiders would divert large numbers of Union warships from blockade duty. As Mallory expected, Northern merchants, fearing for their ships and profits, called on Welles to act against the Confederate raiders. Yet, Welles did not do what Mallory expected: he did send ships after the raiders, but not enough to weaken the blockade of the Confederate coast line. Union ships enjoyed some success in destroying Confederate cruisers and privateers, but it was limited.

Moreover, Welles and Mallory knew their navies had to conduct operations other than those involved with the Union blockade. They had to prepare for and carry out operations along the coast and rivers of the South. Welles had to develop plans to enhance the blockade by reducing the accessibility of the Confederate coast and support Union army operations along the western rivers. On the other hand, Mallory had to develop some kind of plan to counter the Union Navy, with his limited assets, before it strangled the Confederacy.

Hence, to identify coastal operations that were necessary in carrying out an effective blockade, Welles established a board of officers to identify harbors for establishment of bases and refuge from storms. The board consisted of Captains Samuel Du Pont and Commander Charles Davis, General Joseph Totten, Major John Barnard, and Alexander Bache, Superintendent of the Coast Survey office. When the board made their report, two areas were identified for joint operations: Hatteras, North Carolina, and Port Royal, South Carolina.

Welles selected Hatteras as the first operation. On August 26, 1861, Admiral Silas Stringham sailed from Fort Monroe, Virginia, with five steamers and two troop transports, carrying eight hundred men under

command of Major General Benjamin Butler. Stringham's objective was to capture Fort Hatteras and Fort Clark in the Hatteras inlet. The forts offered little resistance, and both surrendered on August 29, 1861.⁶⁷

The capture of the Hatteras forts was a minor victory for the Union Navy, but for Welles it was a significant event. Welles exploited the success among the press and in Congress, while at the same time he was developing plans for future operations along the Atlantic coast.⁶⁸

Before the expedition for Hatteras set sail, Welles had already started planing the Port Royal expedition. The Port Royal expedition was a force of seventy ships and was under the command of Brigadier General Thomas Sherman and Captain Du Pont. The expedition sailed October 29, 1861, and arrived off the coast of the forts on November 7, 1861. Du Pont utilized a circular formation that permitted him to maximize fire power onto the forts. On November 8, 1861, the two forts surrendered within two hours.⁶⁹ The capture of Port Royal was significant, because it provided an excellent harbor to support blockade operations.

Welles' plan was to chip away at the Confederate coast; thus he ordered Du Pont to carry out operations in the waters of South Carolina, Georgia and East Florida. From November, 1861 to March 12, 1862, Du Pont's squadron captured Beaufort, South Carolina; Fort Pulaski, Georgia; Fort Clinch, Georgia; Fernadinia, Florida; St. Mary's, Florida; Jacksonville, Florida; St. Augustine, Florida; and Brunswick, Georgia. By taking control of these various little inlets and waterways, Welles was able to improve his capability to maintain the blockade, because the Northern control reduced the number of ports that the Southern blockade runners could use.

Accordingly, Welles' actions caused Mallory and the Confederate War Department a lot of problems with Congress and the press. Although the forts were under the control of the War Department, Mallory still was under pressure from several fronts because the Confederate Navy had offered no resistance. With such a small navy, Mallory had concentrated what ships he had at the major coastal cities of the Confederacy.

Hence, with the defeats along the coast, Mallory had to prevent or at least slow down the Union advance inland from the various waterways. On the navigable areas of rivers, he established batteries that were composed of the traditional cannons, and he used torpedoes in the area to slow or stop the potential advance of the Union navy. Overall this strategy was fairly successful on the waterways in the East, as long as the Union Navy did not have ground troops in support of them which could take defenses by land.

Preoccupied with the problems posed in blockading the Atlantic and Gulf cities of the Confederacy, Welles did not initially put much effort toward naval involvement on the western rivers. Yet, almost as soon as the war started, the Department of War began to purchase and build river boats for use by the Army as troop transports and gun boats. The War Department's initial strategy was to secure the line of the Ohio River and then, utilizing combined operations, move south and east down the Mississippi, the Tennessee, and the Cumberland Rivers. In its initial stages, Welles wanted nothing to do with the project. He specifically instructed his liaison officers not to commit any money to the program.

Early in the war, Welles authorized some shipments of naval ordnance and occasionally sent sailors and marines West. But, he was more

likely to reprimand his commanders out West, such as he did Commander John Rodgers, for exceeding his authority in contracting for ships. Welles was fearful that the western river fleet, an Army project, would be funded entirely by the Navy, with the Navy's having little or no influence over it. In addition, Welles felt that the most important mission that the Navy had was to maintain the blockade. By early 1862, Welles' opinion of the Western River Fleet began to change; this was indicated when he gave the Command to his old school friend Captain (later Admiral) Andrew Foote.

After Edwin Stanton took over as Secretary of War, Stanton began to push for building rams and armored steamers for the western rivers. During this time most of the money spent to build and equip the western fleet was provided by the War Department. Welles believed that the Navy should control the fleet as long as the entire fleet's operation was under the Navy control. On July 16, 1862, Congress approved the transfer of the Western Gun-boat Fleet, constructed by the War Department, to the Navy Department; thus, with the control went the responsibility for its repair, support and maintenance.⁷⁰ The fleet was officially transferred October 1, 1862,⁷¹ although the Army did not initially transfer control of the Ram fleet.⁷²

For the rest of the war the commanding officers of the gunboats and portions of the crews were furnished by the Navy, while the rest of the crew were volunteers from the Army.⁷³ The Navy provided most of the supplies to the fleet, including a large percentage of the guns and ammunition.

To counter Union activities on the Mississippi River, Mallory built two fleets, at New Orleans and Memphis. Both fleets were composed

of a number of small armored rams and gun boats. In addition Mallory commenced construction on four ironclads. He contracted for the Tennessee and Arkansas at Memphis, while the Louisiana and Mississippi were built in New Orleans. The smaller Confederate boats were no match for the larger and better-armed Union ships. Most of the Confederate Mississippi fleet was destroyed in two engagements, on April 23 - 24, 1862, during the battle of New Orleans and the rest during the battle of Memphis on June 6, 1862. The remaining smaller boats and the Arkansas retreated to the vicinity of Vicksburg. After the destruction of the Arkansas in August 1862 the Confederate fleet on the Mississippi would never again be a real threat to the Union's Western Rivers Fleet.

In brief, both Welles and Mallory's vision of armored ships and their action to produce them significantly affected the navies of the world. By bringing together advances in technology, Welles' and Mallory's efforts demonstrated that armored steam ships would radically change naval warfare forever. The Monitor and Merrimack were the grandfathers of the modern battleships. If only one side, especially the Confederacy, had the ironclad, then the effect on the other side would have been tremendous.

Other innovations included Confederate torpedoes and submersibles that attempted to offset the Union's superiority in ships. Although Mallory's new weapons never proved to be the ultimate weapons against the Union fleet, they did force the Union Navy to consider them during their planning. The new innovations laid the groundwork for other nations to follow in developing future warfare. The Union on the other hand did not see the need for such new innovations and did not pursue them with much dedication.

In terms of operational concepts, some were relatively new -- reduction of forts by gunfire, and joint operations to secure points vital to naval operations along the coast. Some were age-old -- blockade and commerce raiding. In either case, Mallory and Welles established naval warfare philosophies that became the guidelines that other nations followed in the years after the war.

Hence, Welles and Mallory worked to counter the actions of each other throughout the war. Welles had the upper hand from the start and, because of his actions, was able to overwhelm the Confederacy by sheer numbers. On the other hand, Mallory knew what had to be done, but he lacked the resources to build and maintain a viable navy.

· Endnotes

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CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS

Naval warfare during the Civil War played an important role, for without it the war's ending could have been much different. Welles and Mallory's ability to remain the Secretary of the Navy for their respective countries during the war had a major impact on the events of the war.

This study has attempted to answer four questions: First, what considerations and qualifications did each respective President consider during the selection process for Secretary of the Navy? Second, what techniques did Secretaries Mallory and Welles use during the Civil War to deal with detractors to their policies? Third, what role did each Secretary play in the administration of his President? Lastly, in what ways did Mallory and Welles resemble each other in their administrative methods, departmental policies and approach to naval warfare?

In looking into the considerations and qualifications that Lincoln and Davis had to consider for their naval secretaries, each man's background, political abilities and naval experience came into play during the President's choosing of his cabinet. Both Welles and Mallory brought a diverse background in naval affairs with them, thus enabling both men to enter their jobs with an understanding of where they needed to go and how to get there.

Welles initially lacked the technical experience needed to manage the Department's shipbuilding program, but his ability to surround himself

with capable men helped overcome this deficiency. Consequently, Welles' ability to organize and direct personnel proved to be an excellent attribute. Additionally, the contacts he made with officers during his tenure as the Chief of the Bureau of Provisions of Clothing enabled him to quickly develop the relationships needed to direct his forces more effectively.

In the South, Mallory used his technical experience acquired in the U.S. Senate to his advantage. Mallory quickly recognized that the Union Navy was a capable force; although weak, it had to be reckoned with, and he correctly determined that quick deployment of the revolutionary ironclad would give the Confederacy a decided advantage. Unlike Welles, Mallory's unfamiliarity with organizing a department hindered his early efforts, but like Welles, Mallory was able to lessen this hardship by utilizing his established relationships with former Union naval officers.

While both Welles and Mallory were strong supporters of states' rights, they differed on the issue of secession. Welles was strongly against the right of a state to leave the Union, although he believed that states must be able to control their own affairs most the time. While opposed to the South's secession, Mallory supported the view of his home state, even though he believed that the South should have sought another method of recourse rather than secession.

Their respective Presidents considered Welles and Mallory to be their friend and advisor. Both men had excellent relationships with their respective Presidents before the war, and this continued during the war. Welles had demonstrated his ability in politics by his efforts to prevent Seward's nomination for President and during the election campaign that

resulted in Lincoln's election. Davis' and Mallory's friendship went back to the days that they had served in the U.S. Senate together; thus, Davis had had an opportunity to watch Mallory at work while he served as Chairman of the Senate Naval Affairs Committee.

Both Welles and Mallory were effective in finding ways to deal with detractors to their policies. Their long tenure in their administrations played a significant role as a stabilizing influence, because they were able to effectively deal with Congressional opposition. Neither man avoided his critics, but neither went out of their way to embarrass or confront the critics. They defended themselves and their Departments by presenting the facts, thus telling the whole side of their story.

Accordingly, neither man was one to back down from a fight, but neither went looking for one, either. In their daily workings with fellow cabinet members and their Presidents, Welles and Mallory always put forward their best advice, even if it went against what others believed or wanted to hear. They were not the type to rubber stamp a policy or document, especially not just to make anyone happy. Their characters demanded that they perform their duties to the best of their abilities, even if it meant making enemies, as long as it was for the best of the country.

Of the two, Welles had to deal with preventing fellow cabinet members from tampering with his policies and orders. His handling of Seward during the first month of Lincoln's administration set the tone for his participation in Lincoln's administration. In other words, if one had a problem with Welles or the way he ran his Department, one must tell it

to his face, and then Welles would make changes if he thought the changes were in the Navy Department's and the country's best interest.

Welles and Mallory played significant roles in the administration of their respective Presidents. Throughout their tenures, their Presidents sought their advice on significant matters not dealing with naval affairs. They provided the consistency that their Presidents' administration needed, because they could be depended on to do the job to the best of their ability. By running their Departments without politics in mind, they were able to establish efficient and reliable departments that added to the stability of their President's administrations. A majority of the people that they came into contact with them considered them some of the most honest men in their President's administration.

Both men proved that they could handle the political difficulties that came with the job. Within the cabinet, each man established himself as an individual not to be trifled with. They both were ready to provide assistance when and where they could. Welles and Mallory were not afraid to express their opinions, because to them, their loyalty to the President and country required it. While their relations with Congress were strained at times, they were still able to work with Congress to get a majority of their bills passed.

In many ways Welles and Mallory resembled each other in their methods of administration, departmental policies and approaches toward naval warfare. Each one expected and demanded that their officers show initiative and be successful, and if at any time these officers could not handle the job, both Secretaries were quick to replace them with someone

who could. Welles and Mallory believed that officers should be promoted based on their success in combat, not their time in grade.

Their approach toward naval warfare became a game of cat and mouse, each one trying to find a way to get the best of the other. Each one had good plans; the significant factor affecting their ability to get them carried out was the industrial base of their respective countries. Mallory had to try a number of unconventional measures, such as commerce raiding and torpedoes, to find some way to overcome the numerous armed Union ships.

Mallory was the first of the two to encourage and put into motion the actions needed to build an ironclad. Welles soon followed, but his most influential action was to get John Ericcson's design selected by the board. One of the reasons for Ericcson's selection was his promise to deliver the ship within 100 days, and Welles believed Ericcson's model to be the only armored ship that could be built before the South's Merrimack/Virginia was launched. Without Ericcson's Monitor, the Confederates might have broken the blockade of Norfolk and could have caused severe curtailment of the supply support to McCellan during his Peninsula Campaign.

The Confederacy had a Navy, but at almost every turn some obstacle had to be dealt with. Whether it was a shortage of ships, loss of facilities, lack of personnel or superior Union forces, Mallory continuously tried to find ways to defeat the Union Navy. Under such circumstances, not many people could have done as well as Mallory. He was aggressive in attempting to build a navy, even with the few assets he had.

Mallory got ships into the water, but they were usually outgunned or outnumbered.

Mallory took the setbacks to heart. He wrote in his diary:

May 15, 1862. The destruction of the Navy at New Orleans was a sad, sad blow, and has affected me bitterly, bitterly, bitterly! The Destruction of the Virginia was premature. May God protect us and cure us of weakness and folly.¹

June 24, 1862. I am as sick as I am disgusted with the carpings and complaints of ignorance and presumption, that I have not built a Navy!--I feel confident of having done my whole duty, of having done all that any man could have done with the means at hand. I have my own approbation at least.²

Similarly, Welles had none of the dashing qualities of some secretaries and made no pretensions to having a technical knowledge of naval ships. He was an efficient executive who rewarded his officers for success, adhered to the law without regard for those who wished to bend it, gave generous praise to gallant conduct, prepared clear, readable reports, expanded the Navy with remarkable vision and struggled against those who wished to interfere with his policy.

Welles' rebuking of naval officers delinquent in duty made him enemies, but it improved the efficiency of the officer corps. He supervised most matters closely and intelligently. Welles encouraged his officers to find ways to improve conditions for their men, and he did likewise for the officers. Welles had the ability to choose capable advisors and knew how much freedom of action to give them.

Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, said of him:

Mr. Welles was a very wise, strong man. There was nothing decorative about him; there was no noise in the street when he went along; but he understood his duty and did it efficiently, continually, and unvaryingly. There was a good deal of opposition to him for we had no navy when the war began and he had to create one without much deliberation; he was patient, laborious and intelligent at his task.³

The overwhelming advantages of manpower, industrial might, ships, and logistics helped the Union Navy control the seas in the end. Yet, both Secretaries did everything they could with what they had, and given the proper support, both men would have been successful in war or in peace. Mallory and Welles were men of character and vision who led their navies well during a time of great trouble for their respective countries.

Endnotes

¹Mallory, Diary, 1:19.

²Ibid., 1:21.

³Charles Paullin, Paullin's History of Naval Administration: 1775 - 1911 (Annapolis, MD: U.S. Naval Institute, 1968), 252.

GLOSSARY

Blockade: The investing of a coast by hostile naval force with intent to close it to maritime commerce. Legally this is a military action conducted against lawful belligerents and acknowledges the rights of an independent power.

Close the Ports: The investing of a country's own coast by its national naval forces with intent to close it to maritime commerce. This action has historically been conducted against insurgents.

Letter of Marque: A commission issued by a government authorizing a private person to take the property of a foreign state. The armed cargo vessel served a dual purpose as a warship when the opportunity arose.

Privateer: Strictly speaking is a privately owned vessel outfitted specifically and wholly as a warship as opposed to an armed cargo vessel, but carrying on maritime war under letters of marque.

Torpedoes: During the Civil War were moored or fixed mines. One version, the spar torpedo, consisted of a charge fixed to the end of a pole (spar), which detonated on contact with the target.

Davids: Small semi-submersibles that were early variations of submarines designed to carry spar torpedoes to an intended target. They were not true submersibles--their smokestacks and air intakes were always above water.

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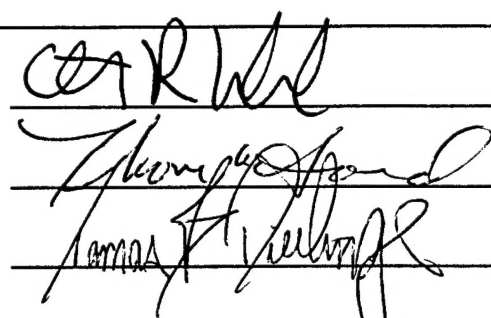
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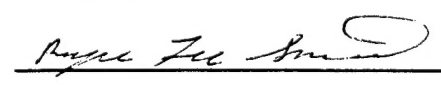
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